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**SEVEN DAYS'
BOOK.**

P270.3

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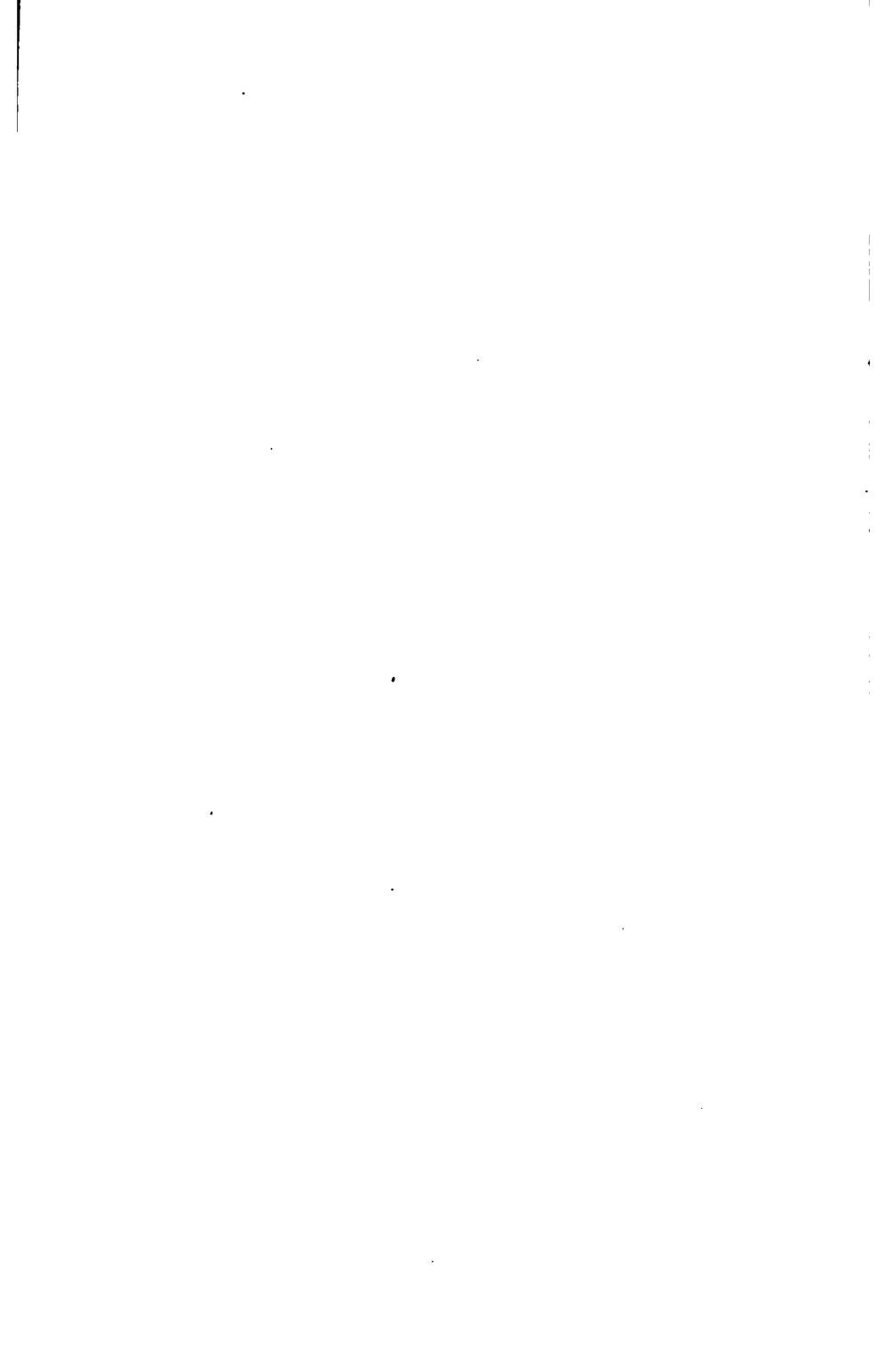
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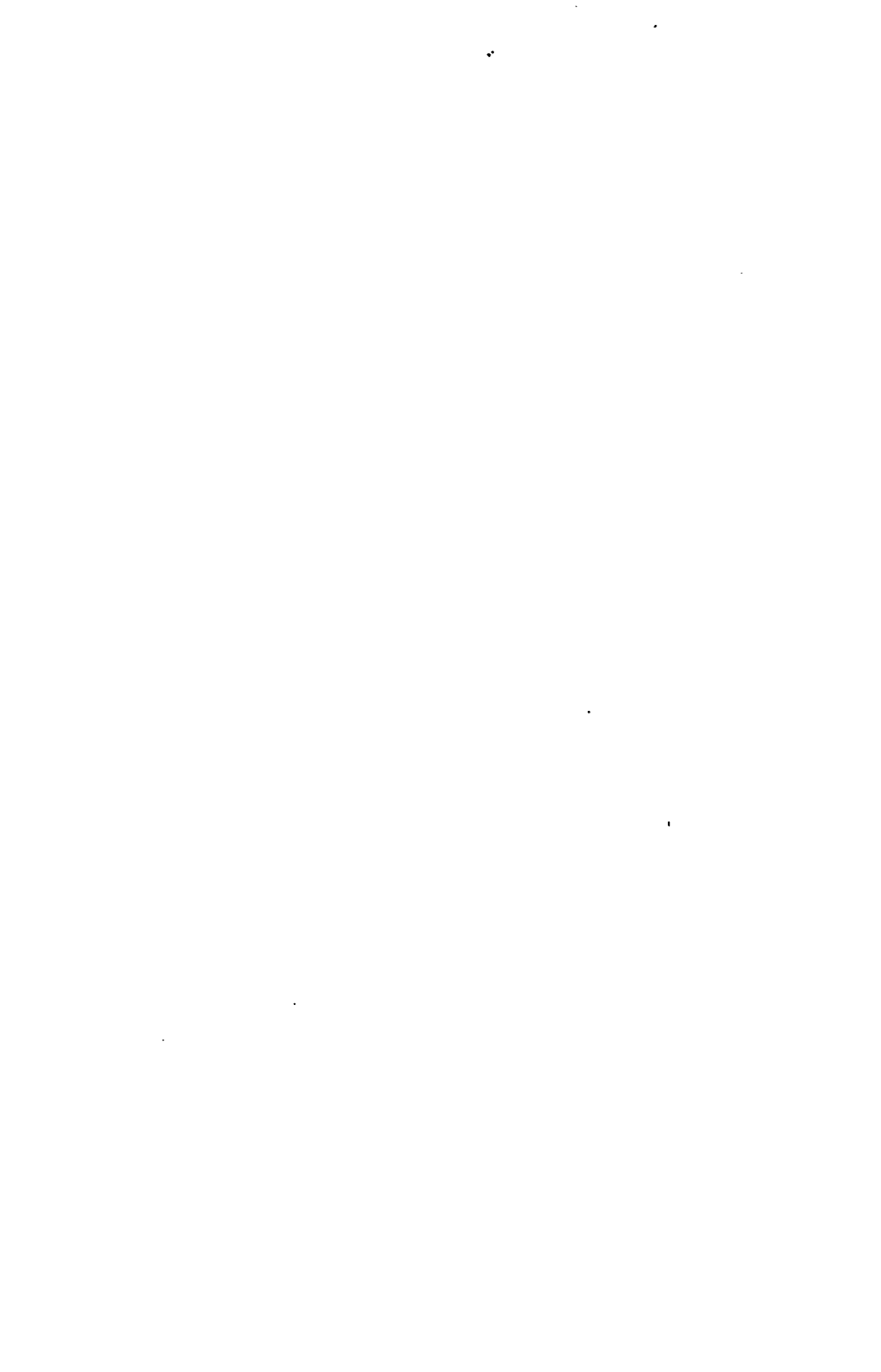
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VOL. XVIII.

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MAY to OCTOBER 1891



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'Who best can suffer, best can do.'—MILTON.

*The Victoria Reign is unparalleled in the History
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**WHAT ALONE ENABLES US TO DRAW A JUST MORAL
FROM THE TALE OF LIFE ?**

'Were I asked what best dignifies the present and
consecrates the past ; what alone enables us to draw a
just moral from the TALE of Life ; what sheds the
PUREST LIGHT UPON OUR REASON ; what gives the
firmest strength to our religion ; what is best fitted to
SOFTEN THE HEART of man and elevate his soul !—
I would answer, with Lassues, it is "EXPERIENCE."'

LORD LYTTON.

'QUEEN'S HEAD HOTEL, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,

June 4, 1887.

'SIR,—Will you to-day allow me to present you with this Testi-
monial and Poem on ENO'S justly celebrated "FRUIT SALT" ?
My occupation being a very sedentary one, I came here to see what
change of air would do for me, and, at the wish of some personal
friends, I have taken your "FRUIT SALT" ; the good result there-
from is my reason for addressing you.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

'A LADY.'

'The Appetite it will enforce,
And help the system in its course ;
Perhaps you've ate or drank too much,
It will restore like magic touch.
Depression, with its fearful sway,
It drives electric-like away ;
And if the Blood is found impure,
It will effect a perfect cure.

'Free from danger, free from harm,
It acts like some magician's charm ;
At any time a dainty draught,
Which will dispel disease's shaft ;
More priceless than the richest gold,
That ever did its wealth unfold ;
And all throughout our native land
Should always have it at command.'

SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHER SALINES.—'Dear Sir,—Having been in the habit of
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valuable medicine, and far superior to all other saline mixtures I have ever tried. I am never without a bottle
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efficacious, and leaves no unpleasant after-effects. I do not wish my name to appear, but, apart from the
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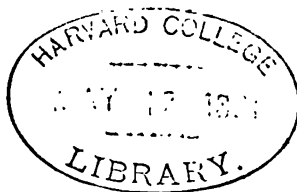
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enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that,
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MAY 1891.

The Mischief of Monica.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

CHAPTER XIX.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

Oh, chance too frail, too frantic sweet,
To-morrow sees me at her feet!—C. PATMORE.

WE have said that Ethel Carnforth, neglected by her father's guest at her father's dinner-table, began to observe Mr. Dorrien.

Harry gave her plenty to observe. All through the evening which followed, he wore the same absorbed, exalted, and yet chastened mien, the effect of Monica's spirit on his own. She played upon him at will; her stronger nature acted upon his, involuntarily; while even voluntarily—alas! voluntarily—no magnetism was withheld. We cannot defend her; he was less to blame than she.

'How those two did go it last night!' observed Lionel Carnforth, the following morning. 'By Jove! Miss Lavenham knows a thing or two. I had no idea she and her sister would have been such acquisitions. I wonder if there is anything up, or if it is all moonshine, between the eldest one and Harry Dorrien. And, by Jove! there is a talk about him and one of the Schofield girls too; the one with the money. How would Miss Daisy Schofield like to have seen Harry last night, I wonder!'

At the same time a somewhat similar query was being put in another quarter.

'Went the pace rather last night, Dorrien, my boy,' quoth Captain Alverstoke, who was Dorrien's guest for the occasion, ere he departed from Cullingdon, after the next day's breakfast; he had previously abstained from making any remark on the point, for reasons of his own. 'Anything serious, eh?'

A short answer, the purport of which was missed.

'All up with the little Schofield girl, then, I suppose,' proceeded Alverstoke, leisurely. 'Ya-as? You'll do better with a Lavenham, Harry. Good family, the Lavenhams,' slowly producing his cigar-case and match-box.

'Look here,' said Dorrien, suddenly. 'Archie, you are a good fellow. I—I know you are a good fellow. Send round the dog-cart again. I want to talk to you.' He looked away as he spoke, and a sort of convulsion passed over his face.

'All right.' Captain Alverstoke lit his cigar, gave the order, and turned to his companion. 'Where shall we go? Outside or in?'

'Anywhere,' said Dorrien, hurriedly. 'Out, perhaps; then we sha'n't be interrupted. Come along here,' and he walked rapidly from the house.

'What is coming now?' quoth Alverstoke to himself.

They had reached the end of the shrubbery and entered the wood beyond, before his companion's pace slackened. It was obvious that the interview was to be a long one, and, moreover, of an unreserved nature, intolerant of publicity. At length it began.

'Do you know,' said Dorrien, with a motion as if impelled against his will to speak—'do you know what it is to have two distinct devils pulling you in two distinctly different directions at one and the same time? Did you ever hear of a man having that?'

'Well, no,' said Alverstoke, his soft, slowly drawling accents dripping out, as it were, one word after another—'no, I should say not. When I was a boy we used to be told nice little stories about the good and the bad angel, and that sort of thing, eh? Ya-as? Always rather liked the bad angel; couldn't help it, you know; deuced good fellow. Well?'

'There is no "good angel" in my case,' said Dorrien. 'We don't deal in such articles hereabouts. But we have bad ones by the score—and they don't hit it off among themselves. If they could agree about me, for instance,——' and he paused.

‘Agree about you?’

‘If they would let me do one thing or the other I might get along; but it puts a fellow in an awkward position,’ forcing a laugh, ‘to be made sport of by two quarrelsome fiends.’

‘Quarrelling over you, are they?’

‘Each wants me to do as beastly a thing as can be done. Alverstoke,’—in another tone,—‘you know what I mean. Speak out now, and tell me what you think.’

‘Is it about your marrying, Harry?’

‘Of course.’

‘It is not then settled with the young lady you told me about?’ prudently omitting the name.

‘It is settled as nearly as it can be. I have gone as far as I can go, without asking her to be my wife in set terms; and now,——’ and he turned away his head, while something that was almost a groan escaped his lips.

‘And now,’ said Alverstoke—‘now, you have, I suppose—for remember I can still only suppose—seen some reason for changing your mind. You have met with some one——’

‘—*Some one!*’ almost shouted Dorrien. ‘Yes, some one. You know well enough who. You saw for yourself. Good heavens! do not pretend ignorance,’ passionately. ‘Anyone who was there last night—who saw us together,——’

‘Yes; I thought so.’ The quiet words seemed to sting the other to the quick.

‘You “thought so,” my good fellow? Don’t suppose it was any credit to you to think so? I did not care who “thought so,”’ with ever increasing vehemence. ‘I tell you—but what is the use?’ and his voice sank again. ‘I—I never was so——’

‘—So what?’

‘Happy or miserable—I don’t know which. Both together. Before I went to the Carnforths’ yesterday I looked upon myself as an engaged man, and I meant to behave accordingly. At least I think I did. Anyhow I meant to try. Now, I—can’t. It is of no use. When I am with her, near her, I tell you what it is, I perfectly loathe the idea of the other. It is brutal to say it, but it is the truth. The thought of going there to-day as I had meant to do, sends a shudder right through me. I can’t rid myself of it. I——,’

‘Then, for Heaven’s sake, don’t make a fool of yourself, my boy.’

‘Make a fool of myself?’ Dorrien stared vacantly.



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'Miss Lavenham's, of course. It would not be decent to be seen over there too soon and too often.'

Dorrien laughed aloud.

'Why, I am going there to-day!' he said.

'You are going to——'

'—To Flodden Hall. To Mr. Joseph Schofield's, to see Mr. Joseph Schofield's lovely niece. To—to——' and again he laughed idiotically.

'I don't see what there is to laugh at,' observed Alverstoke.

'Don't you? I do. I see a lot. It's awfully funny to walk on the brink of a powder mill, don't you know? It is perfectly irresistible not to throw in a match. I never found anything half so amusing. So here goes for the match. Hurrah for the match! What the devil are you looking at me like that for, eh?' in another tone.

'If you must make a fool of yourself, Harry, I have got to help you, I suppose,' said Alverstoke, stroking his moustache.

'To help me!' Dorrien was sobered in an instant. 'Did you'—he pressed closer to his friend's side—'did you say to *help* me, Alverstoke?'

Alverstoke smiled.

'Good heavens, Archie,—if—if you are going to *help* me——'

'I suppose I have got to help you, my boy.'

CHAPTER XX.

CRUEL MONICA.

If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me.—CONGREVE.

'AND now for Daisy Schofield,' said Monica Lavenham to herself, that same morning about eleven o'clock. She had ordered round her horse, and she was going alone to The Grange.

'No, Bell, my dear, I don't want your company, so you will please not to want mine. You are not in a mood to ride to-day, and I am not in a mood to walk. Too much dissipation does not suit either of us. This morning I feel as if I had been out at a dozen balls, and had danced, danced, danced till the sun was up and spreading. I had such dreams,' and a smile stole over her cheek.

'I think I can guess who figured in them,' said Bell, astutely.

'Can you? How clever!' And Monica laughed a ringing laugh. 'Would anyone else guess, think you? Would Daisy Schofield, for instance? Daisy would like to hear about last night's dinner party, Isabel. It is my solemn duty to tell Daisy about the party.'

'It will be very cruel of you, if you do.'

'Not at all. The cruelty would be in not telling. Somebody who shall be nameless is behaving in a very shabby manner to somebody else who shall be also nameless. Is it not only fair, kind, and just to let that somebody know?'

'Well—yes,' conceded Bell, dubiously. 'Yes, I suppose so. But still, supposing, Monica, only supposing that she cares for him, a little.'

'She care for him? Nonsense!' said Monica, with sudden asperity. 'Do you suppose that a silly little vulgar chit of a Daisy Schofield could possibly appreciate—pshaw! I mean——'

'You mean "appreciate,"' nodded Bell, smiling. 'I know perfectly well what you mean. You think because Daisy is rather an ordinary, insignificant girl——'

'—Anybody would do for her, and she would do for anybody,' scoffed Monica. 'Mr. Dorrien' (no longer Harry) 'is not much, he is not brilliant, he is not wildly intellectual, but he is—he is——'

'—Very agreeable to Miss Monica Lavenham.'

'No, no, no; only passable; only just bearable. Somehow I rather like him. I like him in a way. There is something about him——'

'—Monica, Monica!'

'I am not going to give in to it, anyhow,' said Monica, with resolution. 'Mr. Dorrien shall see that. As he told me a lie, he had to smart for it; and it is some consolation to me in this desert isle on which we have been cast, that I have been enabled to punish a wicked man. Mr. Dorrien was undergoing part of his punishment last night, he shall have the rest to-day.'

'*Monica!*' Bell bounded from her seat.

'Oh, yes, he is coming over this afternoon,' said Monica, coolly. 'He asked to come—in a whisper. He had no business to whisper. It was not his place to follow us into the hall, and fasten my cloak. Mr. Carnforth saw us to the carriage; we did not need Mr. Dorrien's assistance also.'

'And yet you let him come this afternoon?'

'Certainly I let him come. I particularly wished him to

come. And that is why I am going out this morning. When I have seen Daisy Schofield, I shall be in the right kind of mood for Mr. Dorrien.'

'Monica, what do you mean by all this?'

Monica paused and looked at her sister.

'What do I mean?' she said, to gain time.

'Yes; what do you mean? You are trying to blind me, as you are trying to blind all the rest, as I sometimes fancy you are trying to blind yourself. Why are you doing it? What do you mean by it?'

'Oh, I mean by it'—Monica was herself again—'only a little mischief, my dear. Mischief is the spice of life. "Shake in sin to give it zest," says the poet. If one had to be eternally good, how very stupid the world would be! Now and then one really must break out, dear Bell. It is one of the laws of nature: witness volcanic eruptions, earthquakes——'

'—Oh, do be quiet, and answer me!'

'Nay, that's just what I cannot do. I cannot *both* be quiet and answer you. Not at one and the same time, my dear sister. To tell the truth, I doubt if I could satisfy you either way to-day.'

'You are so flighty—so silly.'

'So I am. Ta-ta! There is William with the horses. By the time I come home,' kissing her sister's brow, 'I shall have worked off both flightiness and silliness. A little talk with Daisy will be to me what "letting blood" was in olden time to feverish patients. I shall be cool, collected, myself, by—this afternoon.' And she cantered off.

It was a dewy, fresh September morning, and the skylarks were mounting into the pure blue overhead from every field path and hedge-row. Daisy Schofield had sauntered out among the dahlias and hollyhocks, under the pretence of gathering flowers to place within the rooms, but in reality to be alone and unmolested. The poor girl suffered much from the curiosity and conjecture of others at this period. Dorrien she knew no longer cared for her, and she also knew to whom was due the change which had within the past few weeks come over him. But no one else had discerned, no one else so much as suspected, anything amiss; and although she would have given much to have instilled into the minds of others an uneasiness and disquietude which might both have silenced remark and paved the way for disappointment, she could not do it.

The affair must run its course; she must bear her part in it;

George must find out by slow degrees; Mrs. Schofield must be allowed to wonder and exclaim; the younger girls and boys must each be expected to have their word.

Well, she would perforce endure as best she might, as many another had done before her. It was a bitter prospect. She raised her eyes and beheld Monica—Monica, to whom she owed it all.

‘Let me get off here, and walk about the garden with you,’ cried Monica, cheerily. ‘Such a lovely morning! I have had such a delightful ride. What are you doing? Gathering flowers? How bright your flower-beds still are! Do look at the cobwebs on the wing! They are flying everywhere this morning, and they glitter in the sun like diamonds. Shall we come down this tangled path?’

Daisy assented, and they walked forward.

‘We were at a dinner party last night,’ her cousin chatted on—‘such a jolly dinner party—at the Carnforths’. Do you know the Carnforths? No, by the way, they said not. They had nobody from the neighbourhood but ourselves and Mr. Dorrien—by the way, Mr. Dorrien can hardly be called “from the neighbourhood,” however, can he? Ten miles takes anyone out of a neighbourhood—especially in this sort of county, overrun with houses.’

‘Was Mr. Dorrien there?’

‘Very much there! He took me in to dinner. I had him all the evening too. What a flirt he is!’

‘A flirt!’

‘My dear Daisy, *you* to say that! I thought no one knew better than you what Mr. Dorrien was.’

‘I did not know he was a flirt.’

‘Good gracious! What did you think he was, then?’

‘A true man.’

‘My dear child, you have hit the nail upon the exact head,’ replied Monica, merrily. ‘Mr. Dorrien is emphatically a true man, wherefore he is a flirt. Likewise every true woman is a flirt. I am a flirt; you are a flirt——’

‘I am not. You may be. But I don’t think Mr. Dorrien is,’ in a curious tone which to Monica’s ear was fresh cause for mirth.

‘If you had seen him last night, my dear,’ replied the latter, with gay, significant emphasis—‘oh, I wish you had seen him last night!’

‘If I had seen him last night,’ replied her cousin, slowly turning to look at the brilliant face beside her, ‘I should not have altered my mind.’

'You think not? Daisy—I—I should like to open your eyes.'

'Open them. It will do no harm now.'

'Do you think that Harry Dorrien is in love with you?'

The answer came in a low, clear voice, 'No.'

Obviously it was not that which had been expected.

'No? But,' said Monica, slightly discomfited, 'but I thought—I understood—Bell understood—you certainly told Bell that he—that you—that he had given you reason to suppose he was.'

'Perhaps I did,' a slight flush on the cheek. 'I did think so once, I do not now.'

'There, that is what I mean; he is a flirt.'

'He is not a flirt; he never cared for me, but he wished to marry me.'

'Why, that is what I thought, Daisy; and I often wished to warn you in case you imagined otherwise, but I felt that unless I could give you some grounds for it——.' She paused.

'And now you have the grounds?'

Monica began to respect her companion. There was a calm dignity in the young girl's bearing which was every moment becoming more and more apparent. To the above inquiry, so steadily, simply made, it was difficult to find an answer.

'I am afraid I have,' she replied at length, in some confusion; 'I—I hardly know how to say it. But if you had been with us at the Carnforths' last night, you would have seen, you could not have helped seeing, the truth. Mr. Dorrien loves to amuse himself, and—and—I amuse him now more than you do.'

'You are wrong, cousin.' Monica happening to glance downwards perceived that the two small bare hands, Daisy's pretty hands of which her mother was so vain, were holding each other fast, as the speaker paused to take breath. Then she went on. 'Mr. Dorrien never amused himself with me; he is not now amusing himself with you. He tried to love me, he *does* love you; that is all.'

Not a tear, not a sigh escaped. The words fell stonily upon the ear.

For a few minutes their effect was such as utterly to confound their hearer. Monica had pictured a scene so totally different, that she neither knew which way to look, nor what tone to adopt. Twice she opened her lips to essay some refutation, some argument, but twice the attempt died away; and as the two had now reached the end of the little path they were traversing, they stood

side by side gazing into the fields beyond, without a word, the silence becoming every instant more oppressive.

At last Monica spoke.

'Daisy,' she said—and for all she could do her voice trembled a little—'do you blame me?'

'I do not blame anyone. No one is to blame.'

'No one? Not Mr. Dorrien? Nor—nor——?' stammering.

'Nor you,' said Daisy, calmly. 'He saw you; was it likely he should ever think again of me?'

'But—but——,' every moment Monica's astonishment deepened, while the blush of self-conviction dyed her cheek—'but, dear Daisy, I—oh, how shall I explain?'

'You do not need to explain, Monica. I have explained it all to myself. Long ago I saw it. I have known it—can you guess for how long?'

'No,' faltered Monica, a fresh suffusion on her brow. 'No, I cannot guess. I had no idea even now.'

'No; you thought because we are rough, homely people, people without fine manners and knowledge of the world, that we—that we have no pride, that we would let our feelings be seen by all who pass by.'

'No, no, no; not that.'

'That, at all events, *you* would see them,' said Daisy, with a half smile. 'That is why you came to-day. You imagined that I perceived nothing of the change in Mr. Dorrien, and that you would be the first to inform me of your conquest; was it not so?'

Monica was silent, crimson.

'He turned from me the very first moment that he met you,' continued her companion, in the same deliberate accents. 'He tried to hide it; and the day we were at your house I let him try, because I did not choose to have those who were present remarking and conjecturing, but I knew in my heart that he neither listened to me nor noticed me. He was following your every movement. We went over to Cullingdon; we went, for we had to return Lady Dorrien's call, and I had no choice but to allow Mr. Dorrien to go on as he had been doing. Indeed, once or twice I almost thought, I half hoped—but never mind. That other day, the day when you were there, would have betrayed him to anyone.'

Monica hung her head.

'You saw all this, and yet ——?'

'And yet—what? What could I do? What can I do now?'

I receive Mr. Dorrien as I always did. If I altered my reception of him, or my manner towards him, he would immediately guess the truth, and do you think I could bear *that*?’

‘But he had given you cause to—to expect——?’

Daisy held up her head quickly. ‘He had not asked me to marry him; until a man does that no woman should show he has given her cause to expect anything.’

‘My dear Daisy!’

‘That is what I think, Monica. It may not be what some people, what fashionable people, think: I know nothing about those sort of people. But I should never, never—if I died for it’—her voice strengthened—‘show a man that I—I expected anything of him until he offered it to me.’

Again her auditor was silent from amazement. Could this be Daisy Schofield? Could this clear utterance, with its ring of resolution, its steadfastness, its quiet expression of a power and force within, proceed from her hitherto despised and neglected cousin? What womanliness, what nobility! Every after-thought was swallowed up in the sense of wonder, almost of awe, with which she regarded the new creature which moment by moment was dawning upon her vision. This, Daisy? *Daisy*? She felt bewildered, overwhelmed. She could not speak—could hardly think.

At length Daisy herself renewed the conversation. ‘Monica, I am sorry that it has been you, because from the first you never cared for me; and it will make it the harder to bear for—for the rest of us.’

‘Make what the harder?’ muttered Monica, passing her hand over her forehead. She felt as if she were in a dream.

‘Your marrying Mr. Dorrien.’

‘My marrying Mr. Dorrien? I—you—Daisy, are you mad? What made you think of my marrying Mr. Dorrien?’

‘Why should you not, Monica?’

‘I would not marry him if he were at my feet to-morrow.’

‘He will be at your feet to-day.’

Oh, if she could only have denied it! Monica bit her lip till the blood came. ‘Look here,’ she cried, passionately. ‘Look here, and listen to me. I am not sure that we understand each other. You suppose that I—pah! I am ashamed to suggest it—that I, knowing what Harry Dorrien is, how he has behaved, all that will be said of him—that I—that he—that we—that he has only to speak, to have me fall into his arms? That he has but to

turn from you to me, to win one of us, each with equal ease—you or I—it matters not which? The thing is preposterous—outrageous,' walking rapidly on.

'I do not think that the thing is either preposterous or outrageous,' replied her cousin, with some emphasis, 'if he loves you—if you love him.'

'I tell you it is outrageous. Is he to get his own way in everything? Is he to make you a laughing-stock——'

'Nay,' said Daisy, with gentle dignity, 'I am no laughing-stock.'

'You are the best, the noblest girl!' burst forth Monica, with an impetuosity she could not restrain. 'You are—I cannot tell you what you are, nor what I think of you. You see your lover enticed away, beguiled from your side, yourself shamefully deserted; you see in me a victorious rival, a triumphant, disdainful, merciless rival—and all you say and all you think of is that he and I should be happy together. I tell you we shall *not* be happy thus. That man shall *not* have the reward he hopes for. He does not deserve it—I do not deserve it—both of us——.' She could not articulate more.

A hand took hold of hers.

'Dear Monica, I think I shall love you now,' said Daisy.

'Good heavens! And this is the girl he might have won, and did not think worth the winning!' cried Monica, almost beside herself with remorse and burning mortification. 'Daisy, listen to me. I did tempt him. I did allow myself to please him. When I saw, as you did, as who could help seeing, that he was beginning to like me, to care for me—instead of checking him and looking coldly upon him, I threw myself in his way, and—and allowed the rest. I thought—for I will tell the whole truth about this shameful affair—that you did not really understand, nor—what shall I say? I do not mean appreciate, but some word of the kind—Mr. Dorrien's character. He is a curious man; I did not fancy there could be much sympathy between you. You may believe me or not——'

'—Of course I believe you, Monica.'

'But now—but now,' continued Monica, her rapid steps keeping pace with her rapid utterance, 'you cannot suppose I should be so miserably imprudent as to let this folly go any further. It has been already bad enough. I have done that which will degrade me in my own eyes for the rest of my life. If I had known sooner——'—in broken sentences—'if I had not been so

utterly blind—blinded by my own vanity, my pride, my—oh, what a fool I have been!—what a fool I have been!’ She tossed aside a spray, and wrenched it in two as she spoke. A tumult was raging within her bosom.

Nor was she altogether alone in her emotion. It is true that her earlier perception of the truth had enabled Daisy to display, and even to experience, a calmness and self-control which had placed her on a level above her companion at the beginning of the interview. The unconscious dignity of her demeanour, and her deliberate, unimpassioned speech, had done her infinite service in Monica’s eyes, prepared as they had been for jealous discomfiture and possible reproach,—but, young as she was, she would have been less than a woman had such a scene not made her falter.

Not only had her lover, the man who had taught her to love him—nay, taught her the very nature of love itself—been allured from her side by this beautiful, triumphant creature here present, but, strange to say, she too could have loved Monica had Monica willed it.

Monica had for her a strange attraction. She had already done more than justice to her cousin’s beauty and brilliance; she had noted the fine nature underlying all the accumulation of evil piled upon the surface. No little trait of sisterly generosity nor of unselfishness had been lost upon Daisy. No trace of tenderness nor of sweetness, such as would now and again peep out from beneath an exterior overlaid with heartless maxims and designs, had passed unobserved. She had yearned for a word or look of notice. Monica’s disdainful indifference had been felt to her heart’s core.

And now here was Monica humbled, shamed, and penitent before her. A tear, which nothing else had brought to her eye, gathered and hung upon the lash. Unwilling to take out a handkerchief, she put up her finger to steal it away,—but Monica saw the finger. It touched her more than would have done the loosing of a flood.

In another moment her arms were round Daisy’s neck, and a storm of passionate self-reproaches were being poured into her cousin’s ear. For some minutes neither could speak coherently, possibly neither heard what the other said.

At length, ‘Let us sit down here,’ said Daisy, indicating a little arbour hidden in a sequestered nook, ‘and talk—that is if you will talk—dear cousin, freely. I am sure you love me now, and I think I have always loved you. It will make us both the happier—it will, I hope, make *you* quite happy, if we understand each other.

No one will then be able to interfere with us, and no one will dare to try to make mischief between us. Shall we talk, Monica?’

Of course they talked. The sun rose high in the heavens and found the two still there, still engrossed, absorbed, regardless of time, hand in hand, lip fervently meeting lip. It was to Monica the revelation of another life.

‘I must go,’ she said at length, when warned by unmistakable signs of the lateness of the hour. ‘I *must* go, but’—and her fingers once more closed upon the hand she held—‘but I could have stayed here, with you, dear Daisy, all day. I—it is so wonderful to me. You cannot tell, you will never know, what I have learned to feel this morning. No one ever spoke to me as you have spoken. No one ever showed me my own pitiful, mean, narrow, worthless self as you have shown it. No, don’t shrink from my saying so; I know it was not your meaning to do anything of the kind; but—well, no matter. You shall teach me more than this, you dear, sweet, humble, little floweret. Now I know why you are called Daisy. You are the sweetest Daisy——’

‘—Please don’t flatter me, Monica,’ but it was a shining face that looked fondly up into the face above. ‘See, there is your groom and the horses. They must have sent him to look for us. Oh, here is another messenger! Monica, dear, one word more before you go; you will not mind? It is about Mr. Dorrien.’

‘What about him, Daisy?’ Monica glanced furtively round, the very name seemed contraband.

‘If there should be no obstacle, I mean if he has enough to offer, or if—if anything else should make it easy for him, you would——?’

Monica made no answer.

‘Promise,’ whispered Daisy, holding her back, as she was walking on. ‘Promise.’

And at last the promise came.

CHAPTER XXI.

‘I THOUGHT I WOULD JUST GIVE YOU THE HINT, MONICA.’

Defer not till to-morrow to be wise;

To-morrow’s sun to thee may never rise.—CONGREVE.

AFTER such a morning who could be cool and composed?

Monica flew home on the wings of the wind, but she neither marked the ground beneath her feet, nor the sky above her head. When she had passed the same way a few hours before, she had

had eyes for every glittering cobweb and bespangled hedge-row ; now eyes, ears, all were absorbed in one thought, one retrospect.

She was still in a maze of bewilderment, giddy, dazed. Bit by bit she pieced together the whole of the strange interview which had been so different to all it should have been, till she would feel one moment as though even the top of her horse's speed were scarce swift enough to keep pace with her impatience to enlighten as she had been herself enlightened, and again would almost shrink from the sight of Isabel's astonishment and incredulity.

It was, however, some comfort to recollect that Bell had always said her sister did Daisy less than justice. Many a time had Monica, as she well knew, disregarded the gentle protest which her sister would vainly attempt to slip in, when The Grange was under discussion. Bell had endeavoured to discriminate, Monica would hear of no discrimination. Ultimately Bell had learned to take Monica's view.

Well, she must take the new view, that was all. It would be tiresome to explain, tiresome and something more,—there being but little hope of opening all at once eyes which had, as it were, been born blind ; and the vision which had been that morning spread before Monica's own astonished gaze had been one beneath which every heart-string had thrilled and vibrated. But she would do her best with her sister. At any rate she could always by tone and eye daunt Bell. Failing every other argument, sheer force of will had ever been held in reserve by this masterful girl, and if necessary, she told herself, it should not be wanting on the present occasion.

Underlying all was the memory of her promise.

It was late when she reached home, and luncheon, she was informed, was proceeding ; but, being in a hurry to dismount and run into the dining-room, she did not catch a communication which followed. It was accordingly a surprise, and at such a moment, if the truth be told, not an altogether agreeable one, to find her uncle seated at the table with her sister. He had never returned home at that hour before ; what had possessed him to choose such a day for the innovation ? Perhaps he wanted an afternoon ride ; and, if so, would Bell, who had complained of headache in the morning, wish her sister to go out again, taking the other horse ?

There was a visitor expected who would not be well pleased with such an arrangement ; and with this whole train of thought flashing through her mind in the brief instant of her perceiving

Mr. Schofield discussing his cutlet and tomatoes, Monica had some ado to check the first expression of her countenance, as well as to change the pure astonishment of her 'You here?' into a note of congratulation and rejoicing.

'I'm here,' replied her uncle, happily unconscious. 'Here I am; and a very pleasant change I find it from where I usually am. That uncomfortable feeling has quite passed off, Isabel, my dear. I had a sort of dizziness and ringing in my ears when I went in to Liverpool this morning, Monica; though I said nothing about it to disturb either of you, for I knew it was only stomach, so would wear off; but I just got a quiet prescription from my own chemist, and he said I might as well go out early, and take it easy for a day or two. No bad idea. I'll take my holiday this way, maybe. I told him I had had no holiday to speak of this year. I explained how it was that I had been kept to my work later in the year than usual, without getting away. I have had but a week since Easter. A week is nothing—not but that I shall enjoy my holiday at home as much or more than if we had gone to Scarborough,'—hastily, as he fancied he read in their faces that the sisters were conscience-stricken; 'it will do me every bit as much good; and it will be a novelty, a perfect novelty. I have never had a holiday at home before.'

'I am very sorry you should need it, dear uncle,' said Monica tranquilly. 'But I am sure Bell and I will do our best to make it agreeable to you.' All the time she could not help thinking he had chosen rather an unfortunate time to be always about, and at home.

'My dear, you *always* make it agreeable. There is no occasion for you to "do your best,"' said Mr. Schofield, the pride and admiration with which he habitually regarded his nieces infusing itself into his tone. 'But for you,' he added, smilingly shaking his head, 'I don't know that I should have been so easy to manage in this matter. But, thought I, I must take care of myself for their sakes. The longer I live, the better it will be for my poor dear Annie's children,' and he looked from one to the other tenderly, while they almost fancied a tremor in the gaze.

The same thought occurred to each, namely, that they had never heard him so speak of their mother before. Also Monica fancied—it might have been a mere fancy—but she felt as if, while listening to the softly spoken words, she beheld in the speaker an old man. She had never thought of her uncle Schofield as an old man. She was almost sure that he had not looked

old before. Was it that she had been indifferent, unobserving all round, hitherto? Or was it that there really was some sort of change?

By a sudden impulse she found herself at his side, and the next moment had stooped and kissed his forehead. He caught her hand as she turned away. Then she was sure that his voice did tremble. 'Thank you, my dear,' he said. 'Thank you—thank you. You will find that I am not ungrateful.'

'Ungrateful? Oh, uncle!' from both.

'Monica,' continued her uncle, still holding her hand so as to prevent her moving from his side, 'when you have finished here, would you give me your company for half an hour or so? I partly came out—that is to say—yes,' after a moment's reflection, 'I *did* partly come out in order to have a little talk, a little business talk, with you. Nothing very serious, my dear,' seeing that she had become grave, and was even inclined to be apprehensive. 'Nothing to alarm you. I don't fancy you will object to anything I have to say, nor yet will Bell. I ask to speak to you alone, Monica, because I take it that we should be more at our ease, just the two of us, than if there was a third party. Bell will not think me rude——'

'—Oh, *dear*, no, uncle.' Infinite relief and emphasis on Bell's part.

'And though it concerns her as much, or very nearly as much, as you, Monica,' proceeded her uncle, shaking kindly the hand he held, 'well, she need not be bothered with any more than she likes, if *you* understand. Is that right, Monica?'

Monica felt as if every mouthful would choke her after this. What was coming? What was she to prepare for? What to guard against? Surely she had had enough already for one day without this, and without something which might be in store presently. The day was yet young, and she had already undergone one great revulsion of feeling; was she to be wrung and strained anew? And then—and then—another thought sent her back into the bygone evening, and awoke again its slumbering echoes and pulsations. Supposing that Dorrien were coming, as who could say he was not coming, to—to—how should she meet him? How restrain him?

How tell him the cold, prudent, bitter truth? It had been easy enough to picture herself saying anything, behaving with any kind of cruel propriety, and mocking her lover by every sort of feminine home-thrust, when contemplating the scene in her

mind's eye, as with jocund, devil-may-care spirits she had set the world at defiance that merry morn ; but it was a different Monica who now alike dreaded and hung upon the coming interview.

Supposing, only supposing, she durst allow herself to care for Dorrien ? Heretofore, to do her so much justice, she had steadily stamped down the idea whenever it arose in her heart. Stoutly she had maintained to her own conscience that she was but serving rightly a false pretender and double-faced lover. She had hardly intended, indeed, to let him get as far as he had done, but as to entering into an engagement, as to thinking of marriage—pride and prudence alike forbade the supposition. Pride had now been softened ; every unkind, unworthy thought in regard to Daisy Schofield had been melted and fused into a glow of tenderest endearment, and she had promised Daisy that she would, at least, be just to Dorrien.

He had been more sinned against than sinning, wherefore she would torture him no longer, but—and to her infinite surprise she found herself murmuring ‘ but ’ with a sigh. She felt a little pity even for her own self, in that something could never happen which until that morning she had not supposed she could have willed to happen. To cut short enigmas, it was useless to think of Dorrien, and she had only just discovered that but for the uselessness she might have thought of him.

‘ Shall we stop in, or go out, my dear ? ’ said Mr. Schofield, who was in waiting as his niece descended to the hall at the expiration of an hour. ‘ You have taken off your habit, but you are warmly enough dressed,’ eyeing a smart autumn tweed, which even to his inexperienced sight was infinitely becoming to the wearer. ‘ What about boots ? Oh, shoes ? But those fine shoes, are they thick enough ? The paths get a little chill beneath the feet at this season ; my feet have been cold all day. If you would really rather go out, I can wait while you change ? ’

She disclaimed the idea, she had put on thick out-door shoes on purpose. Her garden hat was in the hall, and they passed out through the garden door.

Mr. Schofield walked with a brisk step. Obviously he had recovered from the musing mood which had been perceptible at the luncheon table, and was once more his usual cheerful self. He was even more chatty and genial than usual. It seemed to Monica, who was unable to emulate such composure, as if he voluntarily lingered here and there, exchanged a word with gardeners whom he might have passed, and paused to examine

work which might have waited, in order to prolong a pleasurable moment—the moment being to her fraught with nervous anxiety and disquietude. It was a relief, although it made her internally start and shake, when he at length opened the real object of the interview.

‘My dear Monica—ahem! I am going to talk to you—ahem! ahem! as if I were your father. I consider that I am now in the position of your father.’ Here Mr. Schofield paused, the paternal strain not being his *forte*. Moreover, with the consciousness of being a clumsy performer, he considered that it might now be dispensed with. Then he started afresh. ‘To tell the truth, Monica, I have been thinking about you and your sister for some time past. Your poor mother was my only sister, and you are her only children.’ Here the speaker paused again.

Monica listened in silence.

‘I should wish—I should like—I intend to do for you girls as if you were my own,’ burst forth Mr. Schofield suddenly. ‘There, my dear, that is what I want to say, and what I wish you to understand.’

‘My dear uncle!’

Great as was the importance of the news—and its consequence to herself and to her sister could, as Monica well knew, scarcely be over-estimated—the first thought which arose in her heart was an odd one. It was nothing more nor less than this: ‘But why, in the world, did you take the trouble of coming out to tell me this at mid-day, when in the evening would have done fully as well, supposing I were to be told at all?’

‘My dear uncle!’ was, however, all she said.

‘Ay, that is about it,’ proceeded Joseph, in his homely phraseology, having disburdened himself of the worst at one throw, ‘that is the long and the short of it, though there are a few details which I think it may be as well for you to know; so now, if you please,’ with an obvious intention of checking any response on her part, ‘now, if you please, we will go into them.’

‘But, dear uncle, let me say one word.’

‘Oh, you shall say your word, my dear—you shall say your word. Naturally you would like to tell me you are pleased. I am sure you are pleased, and I am heartily glad of it; but you had best let me run on a while first, and then you will know what to be pleased at. I am a fairly rich man, Monica.’

‘Yes, uncle,’ softly.

‘I can make you and Bell very comfortable—ve-ry com-

fortable,' proceeded he. 'If I live some years longer, you will come in for very considerable fortunes; for the money is well invested, and as secure as I can make it. My eggs are in a good many baskets; and anyhow there's a middling penny in Consols. But that is not what I dare say you care most to hear—though you are a sensible girl, Monica, and can understand the value of good investments as well as anybody,—still what I fancy you will care the most about is this,' and his voice dropped to an impressive undertone. 'If necessary'—he paused, thought in his kind heart 'I will not look at her,' then resumed—'if required, I can make a very handsome marriage settlement on—on my sister's eldest daughter.'

The hot blood rushed to Monica's brow. Now, as by a flash of revelation, she saw it all. Now she perceived why such a communication had brooked of no delay. She had early discovered that the name of Dorrien invariably produced a satisfaction and exhilaration in her uncle's demeanour which plainly denoted that he was not averse to the young man in the light of a suitor; but, worldly-wise and versed in the ways of a selfish world, Monica had hitherto laid but little stress upon the circumstance.

Her uncle might not object to an alliance with an impoverished family, but he would hardly expect *all* the money to be on his side. He might very well say—as a matter of fact she had supposed he would say, were he spoken to on the point—'I give my consent to your marrying my niece, provided you are able to support her suitably,' and accordingly she had resolved that he should not be spoken to. Should Dorrien have the presumption—but, no, he could not have the presumption. Should he be so infatuated—but he must not be allowed to be so infatuated.

Her mind had been in a whirl, and through it all she had allowed the so-called friendship to creep stealthily on. Now, wonder of wonders, what was her uncle saying? What had Daisy Schofield said? She tried to piece the two together: to surmise if any words or hints could have passed between them; to cogitate whether Dorrien himself could have accosted her uncle. The ground seemed to recede from beneath her feet.

'Oh, my dear, you must not take amiss the plain speaking of an old man.' Strangely sounded the voice; strangely felt the touch of the hand which was laid upon her shoulder. 'You are not angry with me, Monica?' a new concern infusing itself into her uncle's accents.

'Angry? Oh, my dear sir—my dear, kind, *kind* friend!' both

hands clung to his arm; 'it is only that I do not know what words to use, nor how to use them,' said Monica, in a full voice, for indeed her throat was swelling with the effort to repress emotion. 'It is so much too much—so infinitely more than we deserve. No one has ever loved us and cared for us as you do; and you speak as if—as if *we*—what are we? We have no claim on you, no right to come upon you for anything. We only came because no one else would have us,—no one wanted us,——'

'Never mind—never mind,' pressing her arm kindly.

'To think that you should be such a friend, such a more than father,' proceeded Monica, with overflowing heart. 'Our own father never cared for us; the little we might have had he threw away and wasted. It is to his selfishness we owe our present dependence on the charity of relations, whom he——'

'Well, well. Well, but he was your father, you know,' hinted Joseph, with old-fashioned notions on such a subject. 'After all, he was your father, whatever he was, Monica.'

'Uncle Lavenham threw us off directly we grew to be incumbances,' proceeded Monica, with rising excitement and disregard of all beside. 'Even when we were under his roof, he grudged the expense to which we put him, and the trouble we gave him. We don't mean to give trouble. Poor Bell and I try to please,——' Her lip shook.

Mr. Schofield gulped down something in his own throat.

'I am very glad we have had this little talk,' he said as soon as he could speak; 'very glad indeed. Now you know how I feel, and we shall be very happy together, and no need for more words about the matter. You are just to be my daughters, and that means it all. Only if—you know—if—ahem!—if anything should happen—if anybody *should* come—such things do occur,' smiling benevolently, 'wanting to take one of my daughters from me, you will know what to tell him. So I thought,' concluded the speaker, with an air of elaborate unconcern, 'I thought I had better just give you the hint, Monica.'

(To be continued.)

On Autographs.

I.

GRAY has written his elegy. He has commemorated the *memento mori* in the country churchyard of those who have 'gone over to the majority,' as men put it, with the presumptuous numerical speculation which ignores the possibilities of a present and a future, of whose limit of life no man holds the measuring line. But it remains for some poet, perhaps unborn, to write a new elegy, and in the light of his inspiration to interpret the pathos and the humour and the irony of those other mementoes, of the great, or at least of the notorious, which lie collected in those literary cemeteries in which the autograph collector buries his possessions or advertises his spoils.

It is true that the squalid and rapacious character which too often belongs to the collectors of such memorials has obscured the picturesque aspect of his chase, and that the lists of 'autograph letters' for sale have intruded ideas into our minds which have desecrated the resting-places of these relics, faded or fresh, and have transformed them into precincts where anatomists drive their bargains for skeletons and physiologists select subjects for dissection—not infrequently for vivisection.

But, however that may be, the fact nevertheless remains that, to those who look below, a great part of the strange humour of life's relations is epitomised in these motley assortments, where the *dramatis personæ* are represented, each by his own signature, in fragmentary moods of grief or jesting, of anger, or hate, or love—moods deep and light, serious and volatile, where are found records of tears long forgotten by the mourner; of wrongs unrighted, forgotten by their champions; of jests from which the laughter has faded, and anecdotes robbed by time of their point, or, as it may often be more accurately described, of their edge.

Take, for example, the collection of manuscript letters, rather than autographs, which lie before us. They are, it is true, bound

together by one link, and possess one characteristic in common ; for, with comparatively few exceptions, they are addressed to a single correspondent, and the reflection of his personality lies mirrored, in varying degrees of strength, across the whole collection. It is the transitory principle of cohesion which unites for the time elements so various, sometimes so antagonistic—the rallying-point round which the assemblage gathers. For a moment they meet, like the personages represented at a fancy ball ; then the kaleidoscope is shaken ; its broken splinters of colour separate to unite again in fresh patterns ; the crimson triangle detaches itself from the blue star to join the yellow octagon, and the green square mingles with what once formed the crystallised design of a radiating diamond.

It is a heterogeneous procession that passes us by in irregular order, or, more properly speaking, in no order at all, except that of the alphabet. No precedence is here given, none demanded ; the living and the dead, the old and the young, the comparatively insignificant and the illustrious, men and women, mingle together in the crowd, whilst the memorials of each are as various in their nature and character as those they represent. Here and there we meet with a letter important enough in subject and treatment to claim attention on its own merits, independently of the name which stands below it, whilst as frequently it is the personality of the writer alone which lends an interest to the trivialities he registers. Nothing is added by these last to the sum of human knowledge or wisdom, they were never intended for publication, would be out of place in any serious collection of letters, and would never, as the phrase goes, be included in a man's 'remains ;' and yet this driftwood of literature possesses a value altogether its own. In the more serious achievements of the literary artist he leaves behind him a monument in which we see him as philosopher, poet, scientist—what you will—he appears before us draped in the costume he has selected with due regard to the effect, and as that most becoming to the character he desires to assume ; but as we read these hurried notes we seem to penetrate behind the scenes, and to catch a passing glimpse, not of the man as artist, but of the artist as man—the man out of whom (not always, as Mrs. Browning has taught us, without detriment to the raw material) the artist is manufactured. And we are grateful for the glimpse.

Not in real life could the irony of fate, or of chance, whichever we like to call it, be demonstrated with more completeness than

here, or men and women more opposite in views, in character, in opinions and lines of life and interest, jostle and press one another in the throng. Here the sinner and the saint lie side by side in a tranquillity as unbroken as where the grass is green over their contiguous graves; here the polemical disputants have signed a truce, the man of science and the theologian have ceased to wrangle, and rivals in politics and art find an amicable meeting-ground.

As one turns over the pages one wonders—but it is a question which, notwithstanding the interest of the subject, one prefers to confine to the realm of speculation—what would be the sentiments of some, at least, of the writers were they to light upon the record here preserved, and to read the history, traced by their own hands, of some episode in the past, half forgotten by themselves, and concerning which they have issued a decree, as imperious as that of Nebuchadnezzar himself, that it shall be no longer remembered by the world. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in his picture of ‘how they met themselves,’ has interpreted, as only a poet can, the sentiments we can imagine would be theirs should they chance upon this silent witness to the ineffectualness of their fiat. Or, possibly, they might take the matter more lightly, like the quondam lover who, re-reading in later life his youthful love-letters, docketed them for sole commentary with a note of exclamation. However that may be, in these pages we see the anomaly take place; the man of to-day meets with the man of yesterday, and, to epitomise the whole, Mr. Gladstone dates his letter from the Carlton Club.

Here, again, we come upon a series of letters, which we read with astonishment, looking through them a second time to make quite sure that our eyes have not deceived us. They place on record the deliberate arraignment of friend by friend. There is no mistake about it. In terms clear and distinct the impeachment is brought against the veracity, the honesty, almost, one might say, the honour, of the accused. As one reads them, one is reminded of Lord Grey’s reply to the indictment brought against him in the House of Lords by the Lord Derby of another generation: ‘In the attack that has been made upon me,’ he said, ‘a noble lord has constantly designated me as his noble friend. I trust that he will consider that he has now discharged the ultimate office of friendship, and will never again usurp the name.’ Lord Derby, we have been told by an eyewitness of the scene, acknowledged the announcement of the dissolution of life-

long ties with the coolness of absolute indifference, merely, from his seat opposite, lifting his hat with a bow. Nothing, added the same narrator in describing the incident, that he had witnessed on any stage had been so tragic. Perhaps to a looker-on the parting of friends to which the letters before us attest, might have had its degree and element of tragedy. But his sympathy would have been misplaced had he concluded the breach to be final. The date shifted, the years went by, and accuser and accused were standing once more before the world as friends. They had agreed together to bury their differences. *Hic jacet odium*; or would it be more accurate to say, *Hic jacet veritas*?

But to pass on to more particular mention of the ghosts that rise to meet us. Here, under the letter A, we find Sarah Austin returning thanks to her friend for some token of his recollection of 'one who is hardly to be reckoned among the living,' and expressing a hope that when the task she has undertaken—some literary enterprise, no doubt—is accomplished, she may 'rejoin that better half that has been taken from me.' It is a hope that, as we decipher the faded characters, we know to have been long since realised.

Side by side with her letter lies one from Matthew Arnold, in which he makes his acknowledgment on Christmas Day, 1872, for a present which, chancing to reach him on his birthday, had been such as 'almost to console him for growing old;' while on the next page Miss Berry complains of her health, and, following her, Robert Browning expresses generous appreciation of the work of a fellow-poet, and Dr. John Brown, writing as a stranger to a stranger, and evidently at the end of an argument, insists with national tenacity in infringing a woman's right and 'having the last word.'

Various enough! but all these have one 'note' at least in common. Miss Berry's health, we may be sure, troubles her no longer; Sarah Austin, whether the task of which she speaks was finished or incomplete, has had her aspiration fulfilled; Dr. John Brown's last word has, alas, been spoken, and Matthew Arnold fears no more the landmarks of age or time.

As we turn the page, however, all is changed, and we find ourselves, with an abrupt transition, brought face to face with the present. Here a baby notoriety confronts us, standing as the representative of life's promises, in contradistinction to its performances. If the writers with whom we have hitherto been concerned had all—to use an Irishman's description of his country—a history behind

them, she, to continue the quotation, may have a pedigree before her, but she still belongs to the possibilities. She tells us that she is 'looking forward awfully' to some promised pleasure. We are glad to hear it, hoping, as we pass on, that in one instance at least reality came up to expectation. And, for fear she should overhear the reply, we refrain from asking the verdict of her more experienced companions on the probabilities of the issue.

A letter with a special interest attaching to it comes next, for it is an author's own estimate of his work, and one also which, being altogether favourable, may be credited with a sincerity too often confined or trammelled by false shame or mock humility. He is content with his achievement, and we congratulate him as we pass on.

Alas ! from this serene summit of literary satisfaction we are abruptly recalled to the contentions of the plains below. Here, in the medley, is a poet making mention of his political engagements, and a painter of the ideal giving his opinion—darkening counsel, as possibly some irreverent scoffer might term it—upon the actual and the real ; whilst, looking a little further ahead, we meet with a practical politician and hard fighter, who takes his revenge for the trespass committed on his domain by being more visionary than the poet and more an idealist than the painter. So that, in the end, all is fair ; the balance is rectified and the motley army marches on together to its common goal.

But to look on, or rather to look back, for in this, as in many cases, to go on is not to go forward ; turning the page we pass to where the yellow quarto paper and faded ink, no less than the careful delicacy of the handwriting and the stately courtesy of the style, proclaim that we have quitted this age of hurry and stress to return to that in which men still had leisure. Which of us, one wonders—of us who are so busy in doing nothing, or, worse still, in doing to-day what will be undone to-morrow, we ourselves not impossibly lending a hand to the work of destruction—which of us would consider ourselves able to spare the time bestowed by Samuel Taylor Coleridge on an invitation to dinner, or on the following elaborate apology, filled with the morbid self-accusation characteristic of the man, which, occupying more than a page of closely written quarto, deals with a trifling oversight in the wording of an invitation given ? As we read it, some among us may possibly congratulate ourselves that we have not the leisure to experience such deep compunction for a mistake of like dimensions. Yet listen to Coleridge's self-condemnation :

and he will be vain of assisting in the
 of the world, living as he has with a bow. Nothing
 since history is recording the incident that he
 in it and he was a man. Perhaps to a
 nation of men to whom the letters before us
 are not to give an element of tragedy. But
 will have been that he considered the
 that the age ended the years were by, and
 people were standing more more before the world
 that had been together to bury their difference.
 of the world to be more assurance to my. His

In the first of the two letters of the
 to the world. In the letter A we find
 writing with a great deal for some token of his
 to me with a letter to be returned among the
 writing to the world when she has under
 letter written to me—accomplished, she
 the letter to me as been taken from me. It is
 to be written to me, therefore, we know to him
 the world.

The letter to me from Matthew
 to me is acknowledgment on Christmas Day
 to me, writing to me on his birthday
 to me to know him for growing old;
 to me the very complaints of her health, and, for
 to me the generous appreciation of
 to me, and Dr. John Brown, writing as a
 to me and ending at the end of an argument,
 to me the right of a woman's right and

to me enough, but all the
 to me. Miss Perry's health
 to me. And then, when
 to me a complaint, for
 to me John Brown's hot word
 to me to move the
 to me the page

to me an abrupt
 to me. Since a baby
 to me of life's pro
 to me with
 to me in Ireland

ures on Life, Form,
ion, and 'who is as
es high.' This last
ish the recollection
he mind of the host
imagine that even a
r well lost had he re-
Highgate.

age, follows. It has
eipient has added its
, 'Written by Hartley
with an apology for the
literary engagement, then

I spent with thee,
long ago,
how they flee—
aile, you know,
juvenility
was too slow.

urlesque below which we trace
ake leave of the Coleridges ;
o Chelsea, the date from the
ilosophic historian replaces the

with an apology for a trivial
ice, has not been allowed to
obust conscience of Thomas
by mistake, and then mislaid
fore he concludes, the note is
on, slight as was the occasion
of the writer.

my horse might carry me
out] any day, especially
me than most others
as we grow old in it.
into the very heart.
T. C.

It

curious speculation to analyse how far the opinions of men are correlative to their powers of expressing them, and in how many cases it is possible that the power of expression was the mould in which the opinion or sentiment expressed was cast.

A note follows, written in a lighter vein. It is a reply to an eminent photographer, whose petition for a sitting, though favourably received, cannot at once be granted.

‘But,’ he adds encouragingly, ‘there will another day arrive (other days with sun in them’—strange confession of faith from Thomas Carlyle!—‘and a studio nearer hand) and you *shall* have a stroke at my face, if you persist in wishing it. Depend upon that; and let us (as the Latins say) “hasten slowly.”—Yours always truly,
T. CARLYLE.’

And last of all comes one of which, even as we glance at it, the writing of the amanuensis, the trembling characters of the autograph affixed, tell their own mournful story. It is only the answer to an invitation to dinner, yet as we read it we fancy we hear the tolling of the bell which announces that the funeral is at hand. He wishes he could come, ‘but, alas, alas, I am in so weak a way, bodily and spiritually, I must in prudence answer that I cannot.’ And the tremulous, shaken signature bears melancholy witness to the necessity of the caution.

And so the letter C comes to an end, and Chelsea and Highgate pass out of sight, making way for one who has disarmed criticism by claiming for himself, what others, perhaps, would have been reluctant to give him, the title of the poetaster—‘the ink-spillingest of friends,’ thus he signs his name across the blotted page, ‘F. H. Doyle,’ adding with characteristic readiness the impromptu verse :

Compared with mighty Shakespeare, writers all
In this thin age are miserably small,
Still, what Pope said he wanted, I have got,
‘The greatest art of all—the art to blot.’

On the opposite page another Doyle is also represented by a specimen of his art. It was only a day or two ago that it was our fortune to be present at a discussion on the distinguishing characteristics of angels and fairies, the disputants being a child and a priest. Had the sketch now before us been produced in court, the question would have been a closed one. No impartial witness, looking at the angel portrayed by Richard Doyle, as it

listens to three babies at their prayers, could entertain a doubt (granted—and who could question it?—that the artist had obtained a sitting from his celestial model) that both the angels and the fairies belong to one and the same race.

It is well that we have had this gay and graceful interlude—the genial versifier and the gentle painter—for there follows a letter which, in its dreary bitterness, is not surpassed in sadness by any in the collection.

The world is impatient of a sorrow that grows old. Like the Lord Chamberlain, it claims the right to regulate the period of mourning, to set its limits and prescribe its fashion and degree; and when a grief, like the crape which symbolises it, begins to grow rusty, it is imperative in its demand that it shall be put off. Only to its first favourites, and to few indeed of these, does it permit the luxury of a life-long sorrow.

For poor George Darley, author of ‘*Sylvia*,’ now half-forgotten, true poet as he was, we instinctively divine that it had small mercy. There was nothing interesting or picturesque—there was, on the contrary, something even grotesque—in the infirmity by which he was weighed down. But whether it would have been granted to him or not, it is probable that he laid little claim to sympathy, as he sat in hopeless patience under the shadow of his doom; rather we can imagine that he would have shrunk from it with the sensitive recoil of a morbid and overstrained temperament, and that the letter which follows, in its apparent contradiction to our anticipation, is, likely enough, only the result of one of those impulses, exceptional indeed but not uncommon, which drive the most silent of mourners from time to time to open their grief.

After thanking his correspondent for some sign that he was not unremembered, he proceeds:

‘So shady is my path along the “cool, sequestered vale of life,” that ’twould not be wonderful if friends on the sunny side of the hedge lost sight of me altogether. I am glad to find myself as little forgotten as forgetful of them. Tho’ the gag which maternal Nature put into my mouth makes me appear a misanthrope, there is nothing I should less like to be, except a philanthropist. But what pleasure can sociality afford anyone possessed with a dumb, or half-dumb, devil who teareth him within, and renders his effort at conversation a convulsion risible and lamentable together? If, however, you can tolerate (like a very

few friends) all that makes such an imbroglio of the vernacular, I shall be as happy to see you as any in the parenthesis.'

One is glad to perceive, as the letter proceeds, that 'maternal Nature' had not been so altogether unmindful of the law of compensation as not, with the disease, to provide, if not a remedy at least a palliative; and that the man forgets himself in the poet as he enters with eager interest into the discussion as to whether or not it is justifiable to correct, with the experience of riper years, the poems of youth. Darley is emphatically of opinion that it is.

'True inspiration,' he says, 'burns always as long, often as bright, as the other intellectual faculties. . . . Yes, judgment improves with years—so does imagination, till both decline synchronously and sympathetically,' proceeding to cite Shakespeare and Milton in support of his theory. 'But perhaps,' he adds in conclusion, 'my verdict may be prejudiced, as *minimum componere maximis*, I could now sit down with all my boyish enthusiasm, purified somewhat, not the least diluted, to write extravaganzas like "Sylvia"—if the world were not too wise to read them.—Ever your's, as of old,

GEORGE DARLEY.'

To this letter the answer has been preserved. Here it is:

'Your letter,' his correspondent writes, 'is both gratifying and melancholy, and suggests many more reflections than I shall trouble you with. The infirmity which you speak of must be a sad trial to any man, and doubly sad to you, who have so much to express and—with this one exception—so much of the faculties of language and expression. But there is another point of view in which it may be regarded and be assured that, so far as the moral mind is concerned, and the objects which you would value most, the opposite extreme—of a peculiar aptitude for society—is a severer trial still. I have observed the consequences of such an aptitude in persons whom I have known, and having seen what success in society has done to them, I have often thought that Nature would have been more truly kind had she put an impediment in their way. You, if you have great trials, have great resources and great strength.'

We have no means of knowing whether, as man and as artist, George Darley accepted the consolation offered, but few will refuse to admit the truth upon which it is founded, as, looking round

at the melancholy spectacle of the wrecks which strew the shores of the dead sea which is called society, they acknowledge that in art as in religion the uncompromising truth still holds good and that no man can serve two masters.

We are sorry, for our part, both for Darley's sake and for its own, that the world had grown too wise for him to amuse it. It would have forgiven him his melancholy if he could have made it laugh. His words, too, revive a misgiving by which most of us have been visited at times—a suspicion that we are loath to admit—that our present generation is not quite so gay as those by which it was preceded, that people nowadays are inclined to refuse to laugh till it has been clearly demonstrated to them that the joke is one of which they need not be ashamed (by which time it is likely enough that the occasion for mirth is gone by), and that when they do laugh they are apt to find themselves listening to their laughter, and observing with satisfaction that they have not, after all, forgotten how to be amused. It is a state of things against which, if our fears are well founded, it is useless to rebel; to be merry when we are sad, or at least serious, to laugh at the jests which have ceased to amuse us, is worse tenfold than the absence of any merriment at all. We had better resign ourselves with as good a grace as we may to be grave, only let us be honest and say that we do so, not because we like it, or because we have got what is better worth having than laughter, but because we must, because the world has grown too old and too reasonable to be merry, and because Folly, like the leisure of which we were speaking just now, and like other pleasant things of which we have not spoken, has met with such discouragement at its hands that she has taken it at its word and left it to get on as best it can without her.

And so George Darley, too, passes out of sight and another poet takes his place; a poet, or at least a poetical critic as he comes before us here, though it is not as such that the world chiefly remembers Frederick Faber.

Dating from Balliol College, he draws attention to an article of his own in an Oxford magazine, proceeding to pass judgment with youthful vehemence upon the 'meretriciously ornate' poets of the day. It was possibly characteristic of the future founder of the English Oratory that he should have acted on the precisely opposite principle to those who 'damn the sins they have no mind to.' Otherwise, considering the matter in the light of his later religious verse, we are surely justified in concluding that the severity

which dictated the stern denunciation of the particular literary sin in question had become modified in his later years! It is Wordsworth who, at this period of his career, commands his allegiance, as he speaks of 'the proudest day of my life—that which I spent with William Wordsworth, the foremost man of all this age, at Rydal Mount.' But in the eagerness and zeal with which, further on, he proceeds to combat and refute a 'great and fearful heresy,' though the said heresy is only concerned with the person and doctrines of Pythagoras, whom his correspondent is accused of having stigmatised as the great charlatan of antiquity, we seem to see foreshadowed the future ecclesiastic.*

Not inappropriately and as if blind chance had for once been open-eyed, his letter is followed closely by another, the writer of which would, we feel sure, consider herself honoured by the near neighbourhood of the eminent Churchman.

Here we read of a friendship not broken but renewed, and renewed, moreover, with something of the ardour which commonly, alas, belongs rather to the earlier stages of life's relationships than to those which succeed them. But a past friendship revived has this advantage—perhaps an unfair one—both over those which, continuing unbroken through a long term of years, have too often suffered the gradual decay of age, and over those which are altogether new—that it unites in itself to a great extent the most attractive features of each, combining the charm of freshness and unexpectedness with that other charm, not less necessary to a perfect friendship, made up of old association, common memories, and the mellowing power of time. To meet once more a friend from whom we have been separated, no matter from what cause, for many years is an experiment which few, perhaps, would have the courage or the faith to try, echoing rather Walter Savage Landor's pathetic protest:

No, my lost friend of many years,
No, it must never be.
Much rests with you which still endears,
Alas; but what with me?

It is, in fact, a case of double or quits; the past, the tender and reverent associations which cling round an undisturbed grave, being the stakes which are risked. But when the game has been played and won, no doubt the winnings are high. In the present instance the venture appears to have been eminently successful.

One more letter, and this also from a woman—one of the greatest singers that the century has known—and this paper must close. We have heard Carlyle on growing old; he found, he tells us, the world getting ‘tragically solitary.’ Let us listen to what the woman and the artist has to say on the same subject.

‘We old people are getting old,’ writes Madame Jenny Lind Goldschmidt in May 1883, ‘*I* rather tired of life. I have lived through twenty lives, and my inner history is so rich, that I sit and read backwards into it, until I fancy I am in the midst of it! Scarcely a day passes when I do not receive tokens and remembrances of “Auld Lang Syne.” What a thing true art is; how it has held me up through life and carried me gently over its abysses. Yes, life becomes more and more wonderful. I often think of the sunsets I saw at Havannah—the half of the sky was golden long after the sun was set! So I find life; so much is golden if we only see it, and the sufferings turn into gold too. *You*, like others, have had your share. May we find our way to the Throne of Grace, and all will be well.

‘Can I only become the last chorister in the choir of heaven, I shall rejoice with holiest joy!’

I. A. TAYLOR.

A Theory.

WHY do violins shudder so,
 When across them is drawn the bow,
 Sob for anguish and wild despair?
 Human souls are imprisoned there.

Souls are shut in the violins,
 They are the souls of Philistines;
 But the Philistines, row on row,
 Soulless sit and they do not know.

But they brandish their eye-glasses,
 Stare at each other's evening dress,
 Scrutinise form or brilliant hue,
 Say : 'Is it rouge or is it true ?

'Some one was flat a semitone,
 And how stout the soprano's grown !
 Isn't the bass a dear? and oh,
 Do look at Mrs. So-and-so !'

Still the musicians play serene,
 As though Philistines had not been,
 But their souls in the violins
 Mourn on bitterly for their sins,

Call them wildly and call in pain,
 Call them with longing deep and vain,
 And with infinite tenderness,
 Since they can give them no redress.

Since not one of them is aware,
Here is he and his soul is *there*,
In the music's divinest chord,
Making melody to the Lord.

So how often in life and art
Soul and body must dwell apart—
Great is the Master's soul, no doubt—
Twenty Philistines go without.

Are we body or are we soul?
Little matter upon the whole.
Human soul in the violin,
Save me at last, a Philistine!

MAY KENDALL.

Will Simpson's Funeral.

AN EPISODE.

I.

SANDY ANDERSON, the bell-ringer of the parish church, stood at the church door and surveyed the surrounding country. It was already the hour at which service should have commenced. The tinkle of the Free Church bell had died away on the breeze, the clock had struck, and yet Sandy had not rung the final summons which would bring into church the groups of men chattering idly in the porch, and a few stray members of the flock now struggling up the steep ascent known as Kirk Hill.

'She's late the day,' muttered Sandy to himself. He shaded his eyes with his hand, and at last descried far down the western road a slim girlish figure, that was hurrying forward in breathless haste. Sandy watched her till she had passed the corner by the Haugh Farm, then he mounted the belfry steps and swung out with irregular jerks the summons—Be quick, be quick, be quick!

In response, the men who stood in the porch prepared themselves to enter the kirk. They stopped their chattering, a look of preternatural solemnity settled down on their features, each one of them produced a copper coin and dropped it with a resounding clink into the plate at the door; then they tramped inside, and settled themselves with some commotion in their various pews. Sandy dropped the bell-rope, and scuffled down the wooden steps. Outside the porch four men still lingered, and up the Kirk Hill came nearer and nearer the figure Sandy had seen from afar.

'Hae ye heard the news, Sandy?' asked one of the men.

'I dinna ken,' said Sandy cautiously.

'Will Simpson's a corp.'

'Man, is he *that*?'

'Ay, an' his mither's fair dementit. "Gin my Will's ta'en awa'," says she, "God isna a God o' love."

'Eh, it's hard on her, puir cratur!'

'Ay, is't.'

They all shook their heads lugubriously, but allowed a faint smile to lighten the gloom of their faces as the last comer, Miss Hereford, passed them with a nod of welcome. She entered the church, and they followed. The inner doors were closed; and presently the cheerful strains of 'Martyrdom' floated out upon the air, startling some mavis into glorious song.

Miss Hereford was the newly elected teacher of the Board School, opened a year before for the quarriers' children. Very little was known about her except that she came from the South—some said from London! The salary attached to the Quarry School was small, and there was difficulty in finding a teacher. Of the few applicants, Miss Hereford held such superior certificates, that the Board could not do otherwise than elect her. This was her third appearance in church. She was seated in the Manse pew, a prominent position, and excited more interest among the congregation than she had any idea of. Kind-hearted farmers' wives, looking at her slender figure and thin face, thought of their own buxom daughters, and pitied her. The men stared at her with a persistency of which she and they were unconscious, and recognised in her a creature very different from the women they were accustomed to deal with. The whole congregation was a little suspicious of her—she came from the South.

On her first appearance in church she had been observed to kneel during the prayers—right down on her knees, on the bare boards! Did this savour of Popery? Sandy Anderson, who had elected himself her defender in chief, said, 'Na, na. She's a braw bit lassie. Gin *she* disna mind the boords, we'll no say a word.'

On the next Sabbath it was further discovered that whereas the rest of the worshippers precipitated themselves from their pews the very moment the Benediction had been pronounced, and left the church rapidly and noisily, Miss Hereford knelt down and remained kneeling for quite two minutes. The superintendent of the Sabbath School, who had thought of asking her to take a class, hesitated. Sandy looked anxious.

With the third Sabbath a climax was reached. At the close of an impressive sermon on the words 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,' solemn reference was made to 'a recent loss sus-

tained by some who have neither part nor lot with us ; ' an expression that roused Miss Hereford's wonder. Then the first three verses of the 53rd Paraphrase were given out.

The school teacher loved singing, and had a sweet, clear voice. She had heard the remarks made by the men at the church door ; they had filled her with an irrepressible sadness, which had deepened during the sermon. Now she raised her voice and sang out almost with a smile—

Take comfort, Christians, when your friends
In Jesus fall asleep,

but at the word Jesus she bent her head down very low. The action was seen by everyone. Her ringing voice had attracted to her some eyes that would not otherwise have been turned in her direction. Horrified glances were exchanged by a few, disapproval was written large in the faces of many. Sandy's expression of dismay would have been ludicrous but for its intensity. He looked at his book ; the Name recurred in the third verse. He watched the singer with breathless anxiety ; again her head was bent reverently but unmistakably down. Sandy's jaw dropped ; he was scarcely conscious of the Benediction and subsequent emptying of the church. When Miss Hereford came out, he was standing dejectedly in the porch.

' Good day, Sandy,' said she, holding out her hand in greeting. ' I was nearly too late this morning, was I not ? '

He made no answer, but shifted the collection plate to and fro on its stand.

' Why,' cried Miss Hereford, noticing the movement, ' you don't mean to say that that money has been there all through the service ! Do you always leave it there ? Does it never get stolen ? '

' Ay, it's lifted whiles.'

A deacon came out, and carried the collection away into safety. Then Miss Hereford, recovering from her astonishment, remembered a determination she had made on her knees at the close of the service.

' Sandy,' she said, ' there are one or two things I want to ask you about. Are you going straight home ? because, if so, I will wait for you at the foot of the hill.'

He signified his acquiescence in this arrangement by a nod, and disappeared abruptly within the building.

The young lady walked slowly down the hill, pausing at in-

tervals to draw deep breaths of the heather-scented air. The blue sky, the golden cornfields, the purple heather, the droning hum of the bee, the liquid trill of the thrush, were sights and sounds that thrilled her. At the foot of the hill she seated herself on a huge stone that had fallen from the dyke. She plucked some sprays of heather, and bound them to one another with a strip of grass. Suddenly her mind reverted to the conversation of the men at the church porch. Tears filled her eyes and blotted out the landscape.

"Gin my Will's ta'en awa', God isna a God o' love," she repeated. 'Oh, that poor woman, that poor woman; how I wish I could comfort her!'

Presently Sandy overtook her, and together they walked up the western road which led to their respective homes.

'Sandy,' she said, 'I overheard what you and those other men were saying at the church door this morning. You were talking about some woman who has lost her son. Who is it?'

'Kirsty Simpson, Jeemes Simpson's wife.'

'Where does she live?'

'At Braehead Croft, yonder.' He pointed in the direction of a thickly wooded hill.

'Is it the other side of the hill?'

'Ay.'

'How can I get there?'

He looked at her curiously. What could *she* want at Kirsty Simpson's?

'Ye can gang by the Barrow Road, but it's nigh upo' five mile; or ye can gang up the Quarry Road and past Donald Stewart's farm.'

'Is that shorter?'

'Ay; it's but three mile an' a bit.'

'Thank you; then of course I will go by the Quarry Road. Sandy, who did the clergyman mean when he spoke of "some who have neither part nor lot with us"?''

'I'se warrant he meant Jeemes Simpson.'

'What has Jeemes Simpson done?'

'He's lifted his lines.'

'I don't understand,' she said; 'is that a very wicked thing to do?'

Sandy stared at her. Here was unheard-of ignorance! Was it possible that she did not appreciate the wickedness of backsliding from Church ordinances? His astonished silence lasted so

long, that Miss Hereford concluded Jeemes Simpson's crime must be too awful to mention.

They had by this time reached a place where the road forked. Sandy's farmsteading lay in one direction, Miss Hereford's school-house in another.

'Well, good-bye, Sandy,' said she. 'I will try to be in good time next Sunday.'

Sandy stood still. A tremendous desire possessed him to speak some words on which he had been meditating ever since the singing of the Paraphrase. It seemed impossible to utter them, and yet they *must* be uttered.

'What for did ye douk your heid?' he asked.

He might as well have spoken Greek. His auditor knew but few Scotch words. 'Douk' she had never heard, and being unconscious of the impropriety with which she had behaved she attached no significance to 'heid.' She smiled up at him a wondering interrogation; and Sandy, growing suddenly abashed at his own daring, hurried off up the side road and left her.

II.

AN epidemic of measles had broken out in the Quarry Cottages. Lest it should spread further, the authorities ordered the school to be closed for a few days; and in consequence Miss Hereford was free to carry out her charitable intentions.

After noon on Monday, she betook herself to the Quarry Road, and followed it to Donald Stewart's farm, where it ended abruptly; a beaten track led her on to the moor beyond. Here there was no track visible, but she knew in which direction Braehead Croft lay, and tramped confidently through the heather.

She was awed by the intense stillness through which she passed. From far distant fields the sound of the reapers' voices was carried up to her on the air; but there was no sound near her except once, when she startled a covey of grouse, and was herself more scared than they as they whirled up out of the heather at her feet. It took her a long time to cover the 'three mile an' a bit.' She was not used to walking over peat moss, and through woods where the ground was slippery with pine needles. At last she came in sight of Braehead Croft, lying a hundred yards below her at the foot of a steep incline. The place looked deserted, desolate; there was absolutely not one

sign of life about it. Two or three acres of ground had been cleared, and a crop of oats raised. It was cut and stood in stooks; Miss Hereford was not experienced enough to note how short the straw was, and how light the grain.

The back of the cottage was toward her; she passed round to the front of it. Absolute stillness prevailed. She tapped at the wooden door, and received no answer. As it was unfastened, she pushed it open and went in. There were the regulation two rooms, 'butt and ben,' divided by a narrow passage. The door to the right was ajar. She stepped across the threshold and stood on the stone floor of the kitchen. A peat fire smouldered on the hearth, and the reek filled the room—a dark, wretched little room, with a box-bed in the wall, a dresser, a broken table, and a couple of benches. The place was silent—empty. She turned away from it and walked along the passage. The other door was closed. She had almost turned the handle when a sudden sensation of fear stole over her; if she opened that door, *what would she see?* She made her way quickly out of the cottage; then her ear caught the sound of a sob. She followed the sound. Behind the cottage was a dilapidated wooden shed. In the further end of it oats were stacked; in front, leaning against straw, sat a woman and a lad. They seemed to have dropped down there from sheer fatigue. The lad's eyes were closed; he breathed with difficulty. The woman sat and looked at him. It was a picture of hopeless despair. It was she who now and again drew a long sobbing breath, but there were no tears in her eyes.

Miss Hereford glanced at the lad, and her face lightened; she recognised in him the carrier who drove past the school-house every week.

'Why, Jake,' she said gently, 'are you ill?'

He opened his eyes and looked at her; he made an effort to raise himself, and failed.

'It's the school teacher, mither,' he said.

'Ay, he's ill,' said the woman, answering for him. 'My Jake's ill. Oh, God! it's hard to bear! First Will, and then Jake.'

She sobbed again; she never moved her eyes from his face.

Miss Hereford knelt down beside him, gently pushed back the hair from his forehead, and wiped his brow with her handkerchief.

'Ought he to be here?' she asked anxiously. 'Shall we try to get him to his bed?'

'I dinna ken. He thinks he's better here. The reek i' the room gars him cough, an' the cough's sair upon him.'

'I think I could make him more comfortable,' said the girl. She shifted the straw so as to give him more support. His heavy eyelids closed; he was already half asleep. His mother had by this time dragged herself to her feet.

'Eh, you're kind!' she said wonderingly, as though kindness were rarely met with. 'He'll bide there; he'll rest there. He *isna* fit for work.'

'Have you and he been trying to work?'

'Ay. The neebors ha' been kind til 's. They cuttit the oats afore Will was ta'en. But the stooks maun be led in. Jake an' I tried to lift them.'

'Does your husband not help you?' Miss Hereford was almost afraid to allude to Jeemes after Sandy's remark.

'He hasna been i' the place sin Will gaed awa'. Maybe Jeemes *isna* all he should be.' Thus gently did she speak of one who was the terror of the neighbourhood.

'Jake is very much changed since I last saw him.'

'Ay, is he. He was liftin' Will o' Saturday, an' he bled frae the lungs.'

'Do you mean he broke a blood-vessel?'

'Ay; I ken it's the sign o' his death. Will began that way.'

'But oh!' cried Miss Hereford, wringing her hands, 'if that happened on Saturday you should not have let him touch these heavy weights to-day.'

'I ken that fine,' said Kirsty with a breaking voice. 'But, ye see, grief has ta'en a' my strength; an' when Jake saw me strugglin' wi' them stooks, naething could keep him frae helpin' me.'

'Has the doctor seen him?'

'He was here o' Saturday. He gied him a mixture. It's a red mixture, Will's was white; maybe this'll do mair guid. I canna work mair. I'll gang to my bairn. Will ye come too?'

Instinctively Miss Hereford knew that this invitation was intended as a compliment. She followed.

They went from the barn into the cottage, turned to the left hand, and entered the closed room. How strange, how solemn, how awful it was, tenanted by Death! The walls had been white-washed, the stone flags were white, the table before the window was covered with a white sheet. The bed was draped with white, and so was the open coffin resting upon it. The one dark object in the room was the coffin lid, propped up against the wall. The two women stood silently beside the bed, and as they stood there

Kirsty's frame was shaken by those terrible shuddering sobs. When she looked upon the dead man, and thought of the misery of the living woman, tears rose in the school teacher's eyes, and fell. Kirsty saw them.

'Ay,' she said, in an indescribably desolate tone, 'you can greet. You who never had a bairn to love and lose. *I hae nae tears.* He's my Will, my first child, my guid bairn, an' the Lord's ta'en him. They may weel say 'at His ways are past findin' oot. I canna find them oot. Why did He gie me my bairn, an' a mither's heart to love him, an' then tak' him awa'? Why did He wait till my heart had grown so close round Will's it couldna let him go, before He took him? The neebors say 'at I loved the lad ow'r weel. The missionar' tell't me I worshipped the creetur mair nor the Creator. Oh, Will, my bonnie laddie, you're deid there because I loved ye ow'r muckle. The Lord gave ye to me an' bade me love ye, an' I did it, an' you're deid.' Her voice was choked with sobs.

It was an occasion to have 'improved,' no doubt. A time to have administered words of correction and instruction. Miss Hereford had not one to say. In the presence of such grief she was dumb. She did what her heart prompted, flung her arms round the woman's neck, drew down the weary head till it rested on her shoulder, and kissed her again and again.

'A' the years I've lived,' said Kirsty, with a long-drawn sigh of weariness and content, 'never a lady touched me so before.'

'I'll tell ye ae thing,' she said, after a pause. 'I didna think to tell it to a livin' soul but Jake, but I'm moved to tell it to ye. Last nicht I stayed here by my Will. Jake sleeps ben, an' the ither bairns are a' hired oot for the hairst. I was sittin' here, an' I looked upon my bairn, an' I prayed: "Lord, Ye ken weel I'm a guid woman, an' a' my life lang Ye've sent me trouble—let me die now, oh Lord!" Ye see my heart was that sair wi' sorrow I'd fair forgotten Jake, an' thocht only 'at I couldna live without my Will. An' I fell asleep an' dreem't. I was standin' by a dark river, as it might be the Barrow flowin' at the fit o' the brae. An' I saw across the river twa men standin'. Then it cam' upon me 'at it was the River o' Death, an' yonder side was the Land o' Promise. An' ane o' the men was my Will. I couldna see the face o' the ither, but I thocht it was the Lord Jesus. An' I ca'd oot to Will, "Help me across, my bairn," but he never moved. An' right oot frae their feet cam' a bar o' golden licht, like the sun shinin' on dark waters. I pit oot my feet to gang

across on it, but a great wind arose an' ruffled the water, an' I couldna see the licht, an' I was feart. Then I heard a voice like the sound o' a trumpit, "Thou art weighed i' the balance an' art found wantin'!" An' I woke, an' the hair rose up on my heid, for I thocht I saw Will's lips move. I couldna bide here langer. I went ben to Jake, an' wakened him, an' tell 't him a'. "Oh, Jake," I said, "I canna be ane o' the Elec', for I hae loved my bairns ow'r weel." An' it cam' ow'r me like a flash o' licht, 'at the man I thocht was the Lord Jesus had Jake's face. Then I knew my twa lads would stan' i' the Land o' Promise, an' leave me *this* side o' the River.'

That night, as Jake and his mother rested together ben the house, Jake said: 'Mither, div ye think God's angels 'll be ony-wise like the school teacher? Did ye see how she knelt down by me i' the shed, an' never heedit her claes?'

'Ay, Jake, I did that,' said Kirsty, and added with a wondering smile hidden by the darkness, 'an' she kissed *me*!'

III.

EARLY on Wednesday morning Miss Hereford was astir. She took a basket with her, walked to the Barrow, and was ferried across the river. Half an hour's walk brought her to Barrow Glen. The house was empty, for the proprietor lived abroad; but the large gardens and conservatories were filled with fruit and flowers cultivated for the southern markets. When Miss Hereford returned, her basket held pure white roses, feathery sprays of deutzia, and tender green ferns.

On her way home she encountered Sandy.

'What time is the funeral to-day, Sandy?'

He rummaged in his pocket and produced a sheet of paper with a startling black border, whereon it was set forth that James and John Simpson, father and brother of the deceased, requested the favour of your presence at the funeral of William Simpson; friends to assemble at Braehead Croft 2 P.M., or at the Barrow Churchyard 3.30 P.M.

'Then they will pass the school-house about three o'clock?'

'It'll be a' that. Will Simpson's a gey heavy weicht, and the road's rough.'

'Sandy, do you think you could get me some coarse wire?'

In answer to his astonished look, she opened her basket and explained that the contents were to go on the coffin.

'Eh, but they're bonnie,' said Sandy. 'We dinna aften see the like o' they. Gang ye hame, an' I'se get ye the weer.'

It was long after three when the funeral procession came past the school-house. Six men carried the coffin, and about a hundred others followed. At the school-house gate they came to a standstill. There stood Miss Hereford bearing an exquisite cross of white flowers.

'Do you think,' she said, 'you could stoop a little, so that I may place this on the coffin?'

They looked at the cross, and all that they had ever heard of Popery and Jesuitry rose up in their minds. They looked at the school teacher, and Popery and Jesuitry were alike forgotten. Involuntarily the bearers stooped, and Miss Hereford laid her beautiful cross on the coffin lid.

Then she stepped back. A hand touched her arm; a tall gaunt lad, with a thin white face and staring eyes, addressed her.

'Will ye mak' one o' they for me?'

'Yes, Jake, I will,' said the school teacher, and burst into tears.

The procession moved on.

Sandy Anderson, and Robert Ross the grave-digger, waited in the churchyard.

'They're lang o' comin', Rob.'

'Ay, are they; I didna expect 'at they wad be here till nigh upon four. The road's bad, ye ken, an' Will hadna wasted muckle.'

'Its sair upon Kirsty.'

'Ay. But we maunna say a word agen the dealin's o' Providence. Ye ken we're but worms, after a'!'

'There they come,' cried Sandy. 'Man, it's a gran' funeral! There'll be nigh upon a hunnert there. They maun ha' closed a' the three quarries. Eh, but it's a respectable funeral! Will would ha' been gratified gin he could ha' seen't.'

The procession drew nearer.

'Yon's Jake, puir lad,' said Sandy. 'He'll be the neist, Rob. Isna he thin?'

'Ay. Jake'll be easy carried.'

'Div ye see Jeemes? The scoondrel! He hasna been sae nigh the kirk for years, I'se warrant.'

The coffin was now so close to them that its decoration could be plainly seen.

'Sandy,' said Rob, in an awed whisper, 'yon's a cross!'

Sandy was horror-struck.

'I thocht she wantit the weer for a wreath,' he said aghast.

'Ye kenn't it wad be there? Wha did it? The school teacher?'

'Ay, just her.'

'I wunner at ye, Sandy. Tae coontenance a Popish thing like yon!'

'Na, na. She didna mean ony harm,' said Sandy desperately.

'She's frae the Sooth, ye ken; an' they hae gey queer ways i' Lunnon.'

'It's a disgrace to the parish. It shallna be suffered!'

The bearers approached, and Rob made a movement forward as though to snatch the Popish emblem from the coffin. Sandy seized his arm.

'Man,' he cried, with a sudden flash of inspiration, 'ye'll no deny 'at the Lord Himself tell't us to carry the cross in oor lives! I canna think He'll be fashed gin we let it bide on oor graves.'

And the cross remained.

ANNIE THOMPSON.

Dust.

SOME of the most enchanting phenomena in nature are dependent for their very existence upon singularly unimportant things; and some phenomena that in one form or another daily attract our attention are produced by startlingly overlooked material. What is the agent that magically transforms the leaden heavens into the gorgeous afterglow of autumn, when the varied and evanescent colours chase each other in fantastic brilliancy? What is the source of the beautiful, brilliant, and varied colouring of the waters of the Mediterranean, or of the most extraordinary brilliant blue of the crystal waters of the tarns in the Cordilleras? What produces the awe-inspiring deep blue of the zenith in a clear summer evening, when the eye tries to reach the absolute? Whence come the gentle refreshing rain, the biting sleet, the stupefying fog, the chilling mist, the virgin snow, the glimmering haze, or the pelting hail? What raises water to the state of ebullition in the process of heat application for boiling? What is the source of much of the wound putrefaction, and the generation and spread of sickness and disease? What, in fact, is one of the most marvellous agents in producing beauty for the eye's gratification, refreshment to the arid soil, sickness and death to the frame of man and beast? That agent is *dust*.

And yet no significance is given to dust unless it appears in large and troublesome quantities. It requires the persistent annoyance of dust-clouds to excite any attention. Dust, however, demands to be noticed, even when not in that collected, irritating motion known in Scotland as *stour*. The dust-particles floating in the atmosphere or suspended in the water have a most important influence upon the imagination, as well as upon the comfort of man. Though so small that a microscope magnifying 1,600 diameters is required to discern them, they at times sorely tax the patience of the tidy housekeeper and the skill of the anxious surgeon. An æsthetic eye is charmed with their gorgeous

transformation effects; yet some are more real emissaries of evil than poet or painter ever conceived.

Until the famous discovery made by Mr. John Aitken, of Falkirk, a few years ago, no one could reasonably account for the existence of rain. It was said by physicists that cloud-particles were attracted by the law of gravitation under certain conditions of temperature and pressure. But this famous experimentalist and observer found out that without dust there could be no rain; there would be nothing but continuous dew. Our bodies and roads would be always wet. There would be no need for umbrellas, and the housekeeper's temper would be sorely tried with the dripping walls.

A very easy experiment will show that where there is no dust there can be no fog. If common air be driven through a filter of cotton-wool into an exhausted glass receiver, the vessel contains pure air without dust, the dust having been seized by the cotton-wool. If a vessel containing common air be placed beside it, the eye is unable to detect any difference in the contents of the vessels, so very fine and invisible is the dust. If both vessels be connected with a boiler by means of pipes, and steam be passed into both, the observer will be astonished at the contrast presented. In the vessel containing common air the steam will be seen, as soon as it enters, rising in a close white cloud; then a beautiful foggy mass will fill the vessel, so dense that it cannot be seen through. On the other hand, in the vessel containing the filtered, dustless air the steam is not seen at all; though the eye be strained, no particles of moisture are discernible; there is no cloudiness whatever. In the one case, where there was the ordinary air impregnated with invisible dust, fog at once appeared; whereas in the other case, the absence of the dust prevented the water-vapour from condensing into fog. Invisible dust, then, is required in the air for the production of fog, cloud, mist, snow, sleet, hail, haze, and rain, according to the temperature and pressure of the air.

The old theory of particles of water-vapour combining with each other to form a cloud-particle is now exploded. Dust is required as a free-surface on which the vapour-particles will condense. The fine particles of dust in the air attract the vapour-particles and form fog-particles. When there is abundance of dust in the air, and little water-vapour present, there is an over proportion of dust-particles; and the fog-particles are, in consequence, closely packed, but light in form and small in size,

taking the more flimsy appearance of fog. But if the dust-particles are fewer in proportion to the number of molecules of water-vapour, each particle soon gets weighted, becomes visible, and falls in mist or rain.

This can be shown by experiment. Let a jet of steam be passed into a glass receiver containing common air, and it will be soon filled with dense fog. Shut off the steam, and allow the fog to settle. The air again becomes clear. Admit more steam, and the water-particles will seize hold of the dust-particles that previously escaped. Fog will be formed, but it will not be so dense. Again, shut off the steam, and allow the fog to settle and the air to clear. Then admit some steam, and very likely the condensed vapour will fall as rain. If the experiment be often enough repeated, rain instead of fog will be formed, because there are comparatively few solid particles on which the moisture can condense. When, then, dust is present in large quantities, the condensed vapour produces a fog; there are so many particles of dust to which the vapour can adhere that each can only get a very small share—so small, in fact, that the weight of the dust is scarcely affected by the addition of the vapour—and the fog formed remains for a time suspended in the air, too light to fall to the ground. But when the number of dust-particles is fewer, each particle can take hold of a greater space of the water-vapour, and mist-particles or even rain-particles will be formed.

This principle that every fog-particle has embosomed in it an invisible dust-particle led Mr. Aitken to one of the most startling discoveries of our day—the enumeration of the dust-particles of the air. Thirty years ago M. Pasteur succeeded in counting the organic particles in the air; these are comparatively few, whereas the number of inorganic particles is legion. Dr. Koch, Dr. Percy Frankland and others have devoted considerable attention to the enumeration of the micro-organisms in the air, and Mr. A. Wynter Blyth, the public analyst in London, has done good service in counting the micro-organisms in the different kinds of water in the vicinity. Marvellous as are the results, still the process was comparatively easy. By generating the colonies in a prepared gelatine, the number of microbes can be easily ascertained.

But to attempt to count the inorganic dust seemed almost equal in audacity to the scaling of the heavens. The numbering of the dust of the air, like the numbering of the hairs of the head, was considered as one of the prerogatives of the Deity. Yet Mr. Aitken has counted the 'gay motes that people the sun-

beams.' Though he could not enlarge the particles by a nutritive process, as in the case of the organic particles, he has been able to enlarge them by transferring them into fog-particles, so as to be within the possibility of accurate enumeration. His plan is to dilute a definite small quantity of common air with a fixed large quantity of filtered, dustless air, and allow the mixture to be super-saturated by water-vapour; the few particles of dust seize the moisture, become visible in drops, fall on a divided plate, and are there counted by means of a magnifying-glass.

The instrument employed by Mr. Aitken has taken various forms; in fact, he has so far improved it that it can be carried in the coat-pocket. But the original instrument, which we saw and used, is most easily described without the aid of diagrams. But, instead of his decimal system of measurements, we will use the ordinary system, that the dimensions may be more easily grasped by the general reader. Into a common glass flask of carafe-shape, and flat-bottomed, of 30 cubic inches capacity, are passed two small tubes, at the end of one of which is attached a square silver table, one inch long. A little water having been inserted, the flask is inverted, and the table is placed exactly one inch from the inverted bottom, so that the contents of the air above the table and below the bottom are one cubic inch. The observing table has been divided into a hundred equal squares, and is highly polished, with the burnishing all in one direction, so that during the observations it appears dark, when the finemist-particles, falling on it, glisten opal-like with the reflected light, in order that they may be more easily counted. The tube to which the silver table is attached is connected with two stop-cocks, one of which can admit a small measured portion of the air to be examined. The other tube in the flask is connected with an exhausting syringe, of 10 cubic inches capacity. Over the flask is placed a covering coloured black in the inside. In the top of this cover is inserted a powerful magnifying-glass, through which the particles on the silver table can be easily seen and counted. A little to the side of this magnifier is an opening in the cover, through which light is concentrated on the silver table. This light, again, has had to pass through a spherical globe of water, in order to abstract the heat rays, which might vitiate the observations.

To perform the experiment, the air in the flask is exhausted by the syringe. The flask is then filled with pure filtered air. One-tenth of a cubic inch of the air to be examined is then introduced into the flask, and mixed with the 30 cubic inches of

dustless air. After one stroke of the syringe this mixed air is made to occupy an additional space of 10 cubic inches; and this rarefying of the air so chills it that condensation of the water-vapour takes place on the dust-particles. The observer, looking through the magnifying-glass upon the silver table, sees the mist-particles fall like an opal shower on the table, and counts the number on a single square in two or three places, striking an average in his mind. Suppose the average number upon one of these squares were five, then on the whole table there would be 500; and these 500 mist-particles contain the 500 dust-particles which floated invisibly in the cubic inch of mixed air above the table. But, as there are 40 cubic inches of mixed air in the flask and syringe, the number of dust-particles in the whole is 40 times $500=20,000$; that is, there are 20,000 dust-particles in the small quantity of common air (one-tenth of a cubic inch) which was introduced for examination; in other words, a cubic inch of that air contains 200,000 dust-particles—nearly a quarter of a million.

By this process Mr. Aitken has been able to count $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions of dust-particles in one cubic inch of the ordinary air of Glasgow. We counted with him 4 millions in a cubic inch of the air outside of the Royal Society Rooms, Princes Street, Edinburgh. Inside the Room, after the Fellows had met for two hours, on a winter evening—the fire and gas having been burning for a considerable time—we found $6\frac{1}{2}$ millions in a cubic inch of the air four feet from the floor; but near the ceiling no fewer than $57\frac{1}{2}$ millions were counted in the cubic inch. He counted in one cubic inch of air immediately above a Bunsen flame the fabulous number of 489 millions of dust-particles. The lowest number he ever counted was at Lucerne, in Switzerland: 3,500 in the cubic inch. On the summit of Ben Nevis the observer, using Mr. Aitken's apparatus, counted from 214,400 down to 840 in the cubic inch. But on the morning of the 21st of July last there was a most marvellous observation made. Though at the sea-level the wind was steady, and the thermometer did not vary, at the summit the wind suddenly veered round to the opposite direction of that below, blowing out of a cyclone, and the temperature rose ten degrees. In consequence the extraordinarily low mean of only 34 dust-particles to the cubic inch was observed.

We now come to the most pleasant of the investigations in connection with dust. The very brilliant sunsets which began in the autumn of 1883, and continued during successive seasons with

gradually decreasing grandeur, have arrested the attention of the physicist as well as of the general observer. What is the cause of the brilliant colouring in these remarkable sunsets? What is the source of the immense wealth of the various shades of red which have been so universally admired? Gazing on a gorgeous sunset, the whole western heavens glowing with roseate hues, the observer sees the colours melting away before his eyes and becoming transformed into different hues. The clouds are of different sizes and of all shapes. Some float virgin-like in silver folds, others voyage in golden groups; some are embroidered with burning crimson, others are like 'islands all lovely in an emerald sea.' And when the flood of rosy light, as it deepens into bright crimson, brings out into bold relief the circlet of flaming mountain peaks, it is like a gorgeous transformation scene. Stranger still, when the sun sinks below the horizon, and a dull ashen grey has possessed the western heavens, what occasions the hectic flush on the eastern horizon? Gradually the clouds are tinged with light red from the eastern horizon all over the zenith; whence comes the colouring?

It is a strange coincidence that these remarkably fine sunsets have been since the tremendous eruptions at Krakatoa, in the Straits of Sunda. Along with the lava eruption there was ejected an enormous quantity of fine dust. The decks of vessels, hundreds of miles away, were covered with it. Mr. Verbrueek computed that no less than 70,000 cubic yards of dust actually fell round the volcano. This will give an idea of the enormous quantity of dust still floating in the atmosphere, and drifting all over the world. In the upper atmosphere, too, there must always be dust, for without the dust no clouds could be formed to shield us from the sun's scorching rays; and of cosmic dust there must be a considerable quantity in the air, produced by the waste from the millions of meteors that daily fall into it. Mr. Aitken has ably shown that the brilliancy and variety of the colouring are due to the suspended dust in the atmosphere.

Observers of the gorgeous sunsets and afterglows have been most particularly struck with the immense wealth of the various shades and tints of red. Now, if the glowing colours are due to the presence of dust in the air, there must be somewhere a display of the colours complementary to the reds, because the dust acts by a selective dispersion of the colours. The small dust-particles arrest the direct course of the rays of light and reflect them in all directions; but they principally reflect the rays of the violet

end of the spectrum, while the red rays pass on almost unchecked. Overhead deep blue reigns in awe-inspiring glory. As the sun passes below the horizon, and the lower stratum of air, with its larger particles of dust which reflect light, ceases to be illuminated, the depth and fullness of the blue most intensely increase. This effect is produced by the very fine particles of dust in the sky overhead being unable to scatter any colours unless those of short wave-lengths at the violet end of the spectrum. Thus we see, above, blue in its intensity without any of the red colours. When, however, the observer brings his eyes down in any direction except the west, he will see the blue mellowing into blue-green, green, and then rose-colour. And some of the most beautiful and delicate rose tints are formed by the air cooling, and depositing its moisture on the particles of dust, increasing the size of the particles till they are sufficiently large to stop and spread the red rays, when the sky glows with a strange Aurora-like light.

The dust theory of the splendour of sunset colouring is strengthened by the often glorious afterglows. The fiercely brilliant streaks of red have disappeared; over the mountain ridge a flush of orange hovers, and softens the approaching blue. The western hills, that once stood out bronzed against the glare of light, are sombre-hued. But suddenly, as by a fairy's wand, the roseate flush of beauty rises in the east, and stretches its beautiful tints all over the sky. As the sun sinks, but before it ceases to shine on our atmosphere, the temperature of the air begins to fall, and its cooling is accompanied by an increase in the size of the particles floating in it by the condensation of the water-vapour. The particles to the east lose the sun first, and are thus first cooled. Accordingly, the rays in that direction are best sifted by the larger water-clad particles of dust, and the roseate colouring is there more distinct than in the north and south. As the sun sinks further, the particles overhead become cooler, and attract the water-vapour; thus they increase in size, and thereby reflect the red rays. Here the red hues, at first visible in the east, slowly rise, pass overhead, and descend in the west to form the charming afterglow. Sometimes a flood of glory will roll once more along the summits of the hills, entrancing the attention of the artistic spectator.

All examinations of the volcanic dust lately collected from the atmosphere show that a great quantity of it is composed of small glassy crystals. An abundance of these would quite account for the peculiarity in the visibility of the first glow; and the evidence

seems to indicate that the quantity of such crystals is sufficient to produce the result. When these are fully illuminated, they become in turn a source of illumination, and reflect their reddish light all around. In winter sunsets, the water-clad dust-particles become frozen, and the peculiarly brilliant crimson is seen, colouring the dead beech-leaves and red sandstone houses, and making them appear to be painted with vermilion.

If, then, there were no fine dust-particles in the upper strata of the atmosphere, the sunset effect would be paler; if there were no large particles in the lower strata, the beautiful sunset effects would cease. In fact, if our atmosphere were perfectly void of dust-particles, the sun's light would simply pass through without being seen, and soon after the sun dipped below the horizon total darkness would ensue. The length of our twilight, therefore, depends on the amount of dust in one form or another in our atmosphere. Not only, then, would a dustless atmosphere have no clouds, but there would be no charming sunsets, and no thought-inspiring twilights.

There is a generally prevalent fallacy that the colouring at sunrise or sunset is much finer when seen from the summit of a mountain than from a valley. To this matter Mr. Aitken has been giving some attention, and his observations point the very opposite way, corroborative of his dust-theory. From the summit of the Rigi Kulm in Switzerland he saw several sunsets, but was disappointed with the flatness and weakness of the colouring; whereas in the valley, on the same evenings, careful observers were enchanted with the gorgeous display. The lower dusty humid air was the chief source of the colour in the sunset effects. His opinion is strengthened by the fact that when from the summit he saw large cumulous clouds, the near ones were always snowy white, while it was only the distant ones that were tarnished yellow, showing that the light came to these clouds unchanged, and it was only the air between the far-distant clouds and his eye that tarnished them yellow. On the mountain-top it required a great distance to give even a slight colouring. The larger and more numerous dust-particles in the air of the valley are, therefore, productive of more brilliant colouring in sunrise or sunset than the smaller and fewer particles on the mountain-top.

It is now admitted that the inherent hue of water is blueness. Even distilled water has been proved to be almost exactly of the same tint as a solution of Prussian blue. This is corroborated by the fact that the purer the water is in nature, the bluer is the

hue. But though the selective absorption of the water determines its blueness, it is the dust-particles suspended in it which determine its brilliancy. If the water of the Mediterranean be taken from different places and examined by means of a concentrated beam of light, it is seen to hold in suspension millions of dust-particles of different kinds. To this fine dust it owes its beautiful, brilliant, and varied colouring. Where there are few particles there is little light reflected, and the colour of the water is deep blue; but where there are many particles more light is reflected, and the colour is chalky blue-green. Along its shores the Mediterranean washes the rocks and rubs off the minute solid particles, which make the water beautifully brilliant.

That this is the case can be illustrated. If a dark metal vessel be filled with a weak solution of Prussian blue, the water will appear quite dark and void of colour. But if some fine white powder be thrown into the vessel, the water at once becomes of a brilliant blue colour; if more powder be added, the brilliancy increases. This accounts for the changes of depth and brilliancy of colour in the several shores of the Mediterranean. In Lake Como, where there is an entire absence of white dust-particles, the water is of a deep blue colour, but void of brilliancy; but, where the Lake enters the river Adda, the increase of the current rubs down fine reflecting particles from the rocks; in consequence, there the water is of a finer blue. When the dust-particles carried down by the Rhone spread out into the centre of the Lake of Geneva, the colour assumes the deeper blue, rivalling in brilliancy any water in the world.

The phenomenon called a haze puzzled investigators until Mr. Aitken explained it on the principle of the condensing power of dust-particles. Haze is only an arrested form of condensation of water-vapour. If one half of a dusty pane of glass be cleaned in cold weather, the clean part will remain undewed, while the dusty part is damp to the eye and greasy to the touch. Why is this?

Fit up an open box with two pipes, one for taking in water and the other for taking away the overflow. Inside fix a thermometer. Cover the top edge of the box with indiarubber, and fix down with spring catches (so as to make the box water-tight) a glass mirror, on which dust has been allowed to collect for some time. Clean the dust carefully off one half of the mirror, so that one half of the glass covering the box is clean and the other half dusty. Pour cold water through the pipe into the box, so as to

lower the temperature of the mirror, and carefully observe when condensation begins on each of the halves, taking a note of the temperature. It will be found that the condensation of the water-vapour appears on the dust-particles before coming down to the natural dew-point temperature of the clean glass. The difference between the two temperatures indicates the temperature above the dew-point at which the dust condenses the water-vapour. Mr. Aitken found that the condensing power of the dust in the air of a smoking-room varied from 4° to 8° Fahr. above the dew-point, whenever that of the outer air varied from 3° to $5\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$.

Moisture is, therefore, deposited on the dust-particles of the air which is not saturated, and condensation takes place while the air is comparatively dry, before the temperature is lowered to the dew-point. The clearest air, then, has some haze; and, as the humidity increases, the thickness of the air increases. In all haze the temperature is above the dew-point. And in all circumstances the haze can be accounted for by the condensing power of the dust-particles in the atmosphere, at a higher temperature than that required for the formation of fogs, or mists, or rain.

But whence comes the dust? Meteoric waste and volcanic *débris* have already been mentioned. On or near the sea the air is impregnated by the fine brine-dust lashed by the waves and broken upon the rocks and vessel-sides. But the most active of all surfaces as a fog-producer in towns is burnt sulphur. No less than 350 tons of the products of the combustion of sulphur from the coal are thrown into the atmosphere of London every winter day. But the powerful deodorising and antiseptic properties of the sulphur assist in sanitation; and it is better to bear the inconvenience of fogs than be subjected to the evils of a pestilence. At the same time it should be known that smoke-particles can be deposited by the agency of electricity. If an electric discharge be passed through a jar containing smoke, the dust will be deposited so as to make the air clear. Lightning clears the air, restoring the devitalised oxygen and depositing the dust on the ground. Might it not, then, be possible for strong enough electrical discharges from several large voltaic batteries to attack the smoke in the air of large cities, and especially the fumes from chemical works, so as to bring down the dust in the form of rain instead of leaving it in the form of mystifying fog?

Organic germs also float in the air. Some are being vomited

into the air from the pestilential hot-beds of the lowest slums. In a filthy town no less than thirty millions of bacteria in a year will be deposited by the rain upon every square yard of surface. A man breathes thirty-six germs every minute in a close town, and double that in a close bedroom. The wonder is how people escape sickness, though most of these germs are not deadly. In a healthy man, however, the warm lung surfaces repel the colder dust-particles of all kinds, and the moisture evaporating from the surface of the air-tubes helps the prevention of the dust clinging to the surface.

From this outline the reader will observe the increasing importance of careful attention to the influence of dust in the economy of nature. As a sickness-bearer and a death-bearer it must be attacked and rendered harmless; as a source of beauty unrivalled we must rejoice at its existence. The clouds that shelter us from the sun's scorching heat, the refreshing showers that clear the air and cheer the soil, the brilliancy of the deep-blue sea and lake, the charms of twilight, and above all the glory of the colours of sunrise and sunset, are all dependent upon the existence of millions of dust-particles which are within the power of man's enumeration. No more brilliant achievement has been made in the field of meteorology than during the past few years by the careful observation and inventive genius of Mr. Aitken in connection with the importance of dust in air and water.

J. G. MCPHERSON.

The Wall-paper.

WHEN I was only five years old,
 My mother, who was soon to die,
 Raised me, with fingers soft and cold,
 On high ;

Until, against the parlour wall,
 I reached a golden paper flower ;
 How proud was I, and ah ! how tall,
 That hour !

‘This shining tulip shall be yours,
 Your own, your very own,’ she said ;
 The mark that made it mine endures
 In red.

I scarcely saw it from the floor ;
 I craned to catch the scarlet sign ;
 No gift so precious had before
 Been mine.

A paper tulip on a wall !
 A boon that ownership defied !
 Yet this was dearer far than all
 Beside.

Real toys, real flowers that lavish love
 Had strewn before me, all and each
 Paled by this royal gift above
 My reach.

'Twas like a treasure in a dream
That never could be mine to hold ;
I triumphed in its flickering beam
Of gold.

Ah ! now that time has worked its will,
And fooled my heart, and dazed my eyes,
Delusive tulips prove me still
Unwise.

Still, still the eluding flower that glows
Above the hands that yearn and clasp
Seems brighter than the genuine rose
I grasp.

So has it been since I was born ;
So will it be until I die ;
Stars, the best flowers of all, adorn
The sky.

EDMUND GOSSE.

The Latest about Spiders.

‘SPIDER’ and ‘spinner’ are synonymous words. From time immemorial the animal has attracted observation principally on account of its web-making skill, and in many languages other than our own its name testifies to this fact. Nevertheless, it is only quite recently that anything very definite has been known of the complicated apparatus by which the spinning is accomplished; and many statements with regard to it, either entirely mistaken or much exaggerated, are constantly repeated in works of natural history, and have obtained a wide popular currency.

The results of recent research in this field will possibly prove of general interest, while they certainly will not tend to diminish the admiration which has always been excited by the strange talent which is so characteristic of this group of animals.

The external spinning organs are situated on a little circular area underneath the spider’s abdomen, and consist of four or six finger-like protuberances, apparently bristling with hairs. These protuberances are the *spinnerets*, and are exceedingly mobile and muscular, the animal being able to rub them together or to separate them widely at will. When at rest, they form a little pyramid, their free ends being in contact at its apex, in the middle of the circular area. In those spiders which possess six, two are comparatively small, and are concealed within the pyramid formed by the other four.

The hair-like bodies with which they bristle are in reality excessively fine tubes, prolonged beyond the spinnerets themselves. Among them may be noticed a very few of much greater calibre and more tube-like appearance.

It is from these various tubes that the spider-silk is emitted, and they are continuous with the internal organs, or ‘glands,’ where it is formed.

Now, a gland is a kind of factory. Wherever a fluid, such as milk, or venom, or bile, is elaborated by an animal, the object is accomplished by a special gland, which somehow withdraws from the blood the materials it requires.

Why one gland should be able to secrete milk and another poison from the same source is by no means easy to understand, but in some way this power of selection is possessed by them.

The real organs, therefore, which produce the silk are the spinning glands. They manufacture and store it up in the form of a gummy fluid, and it is only on meeting the air as it proceeds from the fine spinning tubes that it hardens and forms silken threads. Each gland has its own separate opening on one of the hair-like tubes which crown the spinnerets.

Now, when the small size of the entire animal and the microscopic dimensions of the spinning tubes are taken into account, it will be easily understood that the zoologist who undertook to investigate the individual glands and trace them to their orifices had set himself no easy task. It has, however, been successfully accomplished in the case of eight different genera of spiders by Dr. Carl Apstein, whose performance is a notable one even in the annals of microscopic anatomy.

Of all the different groups of spiders, those in which the organs we are considering are most highly developed are the Orbitelariæ, the spinners of the familiar wheel-like web. If, therefore, we confine our attention to a member of this group—which is conveniently represented by the large garden spider with the white cross on its back (*Epeira diademata*)—we shall find the spinning apparatus in its most complex form.

This spider possesses six spinnerets, or finger-like processes, bearing the spinning tubes. They are arranged in three pairs—the anterior, the middle, and the posterior. Within the body of the spider are found five distinct kinds of spinning glands, some small and numerous, others large and few in number. Altogether there are about four hundred glands, and this, therefore, is approximately the maximum number of threads which the animal can emit. Moreover, it is known precisely how the orifices of these various glands are distributed over the ends of the six spinnerets.

Now, as there are here five varieties of spinning glands, the inevitable inference is that they are used by the spider for different purposes; and we are naturally led to inquire what these purposes may be. In what different spinning operations does the animal engage?

There are three distinct operations which occur to us after a little consideration—the construction of the web, the binding up of captured flies, and the building of the cocoon of fluffy yellow silk, which affords protection for the eggs.

But on further examination the web proves not to be of the same nature throughout. The foundation lines between which it is stretched, and the radial lines, or spokes of the wheel, differ considerably from the spiral line which, beginning near the centre, crosses the radii in successive curves until the circumference is reached. The former are dry and not adhesive, but the spiral line, besides possessing greater elasticity, is studded over with viscid globules, which act like bird-lime on any insect which is unfortunate enough to come into contact with them.

Not long ago the writer endeavoured to determine the particular use of the five different kinds of glands. The method to be adopted was apparently simple enough, though the practical difficulties proved to be by no means few. The spider was to be caught in the act of performing its various spinning operations; and, by the aid of a microscope, the thread it happened to be employing was to be traced to the particular spinning-tubes, and, therefore, to the particular glands from which it emanated.

The first successful experiments led to rather an interesting discovery, quite at variance with the current belief with regard to the nature of the spider's thread.

It had previously been noticed that an apparently single line started from the point to which it was attached, as a multitude of fine threads spreading out in all directions. What more natural, therefore, than that the single line should be thought to consist of multitudinous finer threads fused or interwoven together? What more natural, again, than that the number of these constituent threads should be exaggerated from hundreds to thousands, and a fabulous fineness attributed to them?

But the microscope told another tale, and it was quickly evident that the numerous attachment threads ceased almost immediately, and only served to anchor the continuous line to its starting-point, while the line itself consisted sometimes of two, sometimes of four, strands, proceeding from the larger tubes previously alluded to. These strands, moreover, were not interwoven or fused, but simply lying side by side, and easily separated by slackening the line and blowing upon it. As an example of the method of investigation, one of the earlier experiments may be described rather more fully. A simple apparatus was

devised so that the creature could be confined—quite painlessly—in such a way that its spinnerets could be observed under the microscope. With a little dexterity this confinement was accomplished with the line it was engaged in weaving still unbroken. By the aid of a good light and a gentle strain on the line its precise source could be clearly perceived.

Now, when a thread has once been started, it may be artificially drawn out from the spider almost indefinitely. The animal can throw new tubes into play, but it does not seem able to directly prevent the flow of the silk. The mobility of the spinnerets is wonderful to watch. The line may at first consist of two strands emanating from the larger tubes. Presently the animal may decide to strengthen it, and the spinnerets are rubbed together, with the result that two more tubes are brought into play, and the line is fourfold. This may again be varied by the employment of still other tubes, until perhaps the whole battery is in action. The result is a band rather than a thread of silk, and the strands are perfectly distinct, without any adherence or interweaving. Finally, a movement more abrupt than usual may break the silk—an action generally accomplished in the free state by one of the hind legs—and the flow may cease.

Further experiments prove that, of the three kinds of larger glands, one serves chiefly to lay down the foundation lines and radii of the web, a second to supply the silk for the cocoon, and the third to furnish the viscid matter with which the spiral line is studded. Of the two groups of small and numerous glands one is principally used to anchor the stouter line to the point of departure, while both supply the strands of the broad silken band with which a captured insect is so deftly enwrapped.

Here again it may be said that fact is stranger than fiction, and the complexity of the spider's spinning apparatus appears even more wonderful in the further light that has been thrown upon it, though we are forced to discard the oft-repeated fable that the line, fine as it appears, is composed of thousands of inconceivably finer strands.

CECIL Warburton.

*The Three Fates*¹.

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD, AUTHOR OF 'MR. ISAACS,'
'DR. CLAUDIUS,' &c.

CHAPTER I.

JONAH WOOD was bitterly disappointed in his son. During five-and-twenty years he had looked in vain for the development of those qualities in George which alone, in his opinion, could insure success. But though George could talk intelligently about the great movements of business in New York, it was clear by this time that he did not possess what his father called 'business instincts.' The old man could have forgiven him his defective appreciation in the matter of dollars and cents, however, if he had shown the slightest inclination to adopt one of the regular professions; in other words, if George had ceased to waste his time in the attempt to earn money with his pen, and had submitted to becoming a scribe in a lawyer's office, old Wood would have been satisfied. The boy's progress might have been slow, but it would have been sure.

It was strange to see how this elderly man, who had been ruined by the exercise of his own business faculties, still pinned his faith upon his own views and theories of finance, and regarded it as a real misfortune to be the father of a son who thought differently from himself. It would have satisfied the height of his ambition to see George installed as a clerk on a nominal salary in one of the great banking houses. Possibly, at an earlier period, and before George had finally refused to enter a career of business, there may have been in the bottom of the old man's heart a hope that his son might some day become a financial power, and wreak vengeance for his own and his father's losses upon Thomas Craik or his heirs after him; but if this wish existed Jonah Wood had honestly tried to put it out of the way.

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He was of a religious disposition, and his moral rectitude was above all doubt. He did not forgive his enemies, but he sincerely meant to do so, and did his best not to entertain any hope of revenge.

The story of his wrongs was a simple one. He had formerly been a very successful man. Of a good New England family, he had come to New York when very young, possessed of a small capital, full of integrity, industry, and determination. At the age of forty he was at the head of a banking firm which had for a time enjoyed a reputation of some importance. Then he had married a young lady of good birth and possessing a little fortune, to whom he had been attached for years and who had waited for him with touching fidelity. Twelve months later she had died in giving birth to George. Possibly the terrible shock weakened Jonah Wood's nerves and disturbed the balance of his faculties. At all events it was at this time that he began to enter into speculation. At first he was very successful, and his success threw him into closer intimacy with Thomas Craik, a cousin of his dead wife's. For a time everything prospered with the bank, while Wood acquired the habit of following Craik's advice. On an ill-fated day, however, the latter persuaded him to invest largely in a certain railway not yet begun, but which was completed in a marvellously short space of time. In the course of a year or two it was evident that the road, which Craik insisted on running upon the most ruinous principles, must soon become bankrupt. It had of course been built to compete with an old-established line; the usual war of rates set in, the old road suffered severely, and the young one was ruined. This was precisely what Craik had anticipated. So soon as the bankruptcy was declared and the liquidation terminated, he bought up every bond and share upon which he could lay his hands. Wood was ruined, together with a number of other heavy investors. The road, however, having ceased to pay interest on its debts, continued to run at rates disastrous to its more honest competitor, and before long the latter was obliged in self-defence to buy up its rival. When that extremity was reached Thomas Craik was in possession of enough bonds and stock to give him a controlling interest, and he sold the ruined railway at his own price, realising a large fortune by the transaction. Wood was not only financially broken; his reputation, too, had suffered in the catastrophe. At first, people looked askance at him, believing that he had got a share of the profits, and that he was only pretending poverty

until the scandal should blow over, though he had in reality sacrificed almost everything he possessed in the honourable liquidation of the bank's affairs, and found himself at the age of fifty-seven in possession only of the small fortune that had been his wife's and of the small house which had escaped the general ruin, and in which he now lived. Thomas Craik had robbed him, as he had robbed many others, and Jonah Wood knew it, though there was no possibility of ever recovering a penny of his losses. His nerve was gone, and by the time people had discovered that he was the most honest of men he was more than half forgotten by those he had known best. He had neither the energy nor the courage to begin life again, and although he had cleared his reputation of all blame, he knew that he had made the great mistake, and that no one would ever again trust to his judgment. It seemed easiest to live in the little house, to get what could be got out of life for himself and his son on an income of scarcely two thousand dollars, and to shut himself out from his former acquaintance.

And yet, though his own career had ended in such lamentable failure, he would gladly have seen George begin where he had begun. George would have succeeded in doing all those things which he himself had left undone, and he might have lived to see established on a firm basis the great fortune which for a few brief years had been his in a floating state. But George could not be brought to understand this point of view. His youthful recollections were connected with monetary disaster, and his first boyish antipathies had been conceived against everything that bore the name of business. What he felt for the career of the money-maker was more than antipathy; it amounted to a positive horror which he could not overcome. From time to time his father returned to the old story of his wrongs and misfortunes, going over the tale as he sat with George through the long winter evenings, and entering into every detail of the transaction which had ruined him. In justice to the young man it must be admitted that he was patient on those occasions, and listened with outward calm to the long technical explanations, the interminable concatenation of figures and the jarring cadence of phrases that all ended with the word 'dollars.' But the talk was as painful to him as a violin played out of tune is to a musician, and it reacted upon his nerves and produced physical pain of an acute kind. He could set his features in an expression of respectful attention, but he could not help twisting his long smooth fingers together under

the edge of the table, where his father could not see them. The very name of money disgusted him, and when the great failure had been talked of in the evening it haunted his dreams throughout the night and destroyed his rest, so that he awoke with a sense of nervousness and distress from which he could not escape until late in the following day.

Jonah Wood saw more of this peculiarity than his son suspected, though he failed to understand it. With him, nervousness took a different form, manifesting itself in an abnormal anxiety concerning George's welfare, combined with an unfortunate disposition to find fault. Of late, indeed, he had not been able to accuse the young man of idleness, since he was evidently working to the utmost of his strength, though his occupations brought him but little return. It seemed a pity to Jonah Wood that so much good time and so much young energy should be wasted over pen, ink, paper, and books which left no record of a daily substantial gain. He, too, slept little, though his iron-grey face betrayed nothing of what passed in his mind.

He loved his son in his own untrusting way. It was his affection, combined with his inability to believe much good of what he loved, that undermined and embittered the few pleasures still left to him. He had never seen any hope except in money, and since George hated the very mention of lucre there could be no hope for him either. A good man, a scrupulously honest man according to his lights, he could only see goodness from one point of view, and virtue represented in one dress. Goodness was obedience to parental authority, and virtue the imitation of parental ideas. George believed that obedience should play no part in determining what he should do with his talent, and that imitation, though it be the sincerest flattery, may lay the foundation for the most hopeless of all failures—the failure to do that for which a man is best adapted.

George had not deliberately chosen a literary career because he felt himself fitted for it. He was in reality far too modest to look forward from the first to the ultimate satisfaction of his ambitions. His lonely life had driven him to writing as a means of expressing himself without incurring his father's criticism and contradiction. Not understanding in the least the nature of imagination, he believed himself lacking in this respect, but he had at once found an immense satisfaction in writing down his opinions concerning certain new books that had fallen into his hands. Then, being emboldened by that belief in his own judg-

ment which young men acquire very easily when they are not brought into daily contact with their intellectual equals, he had ventured to offer the latest of his attempts to one editor and then to another and another. At last he had found one who chanced to be in a human humour and who glanced at one of the papers.

‘It is not worthless,’ said the autocrat, ‘but it is quite useless. Everybody has done with the book months ago. Do you want to earn a little money by reviewing?’

George expressed his readiness to do so with alacrity. The editor scribbled half a dozen words on a slip of paper from a block and handed it to George, telling him where to take it. As a first result the young man carried away a couple of volumes of new-born trash upon which to try his hand. A quarter of what he wrote was published in the literary column of the newspaper. He had yet to learn the cynical practice of counting words, upon which so much depends in dealing with the daily press, but the idea of actually earning something, no matter how little, overcame his first feeling of disgust at the nature of the work. In time he acquired the necessary tricks and did very well. By sheer determination he devoted all his best hours of the day to the drudgery of second-class criticism, and only allowed himself to write what was agreeable to his own brain when the day’s work was done.

The idea of producing a book did not suggest itself to him. In his own opinion he had none of the necessary gifts for original writing, while he fancied that he possessed those of the critic in a rather unusual degree. His highest ambition was to turn out a volume of essays on other people’s doings and writings, and he was constantly labouring in his leisure moments at long papers treating of celebrated works, in what he believed to be a spirit of profound analysis. As yet no one had bestowed the slightest attention upon his efforts; no serious article of his had found its way into the press, though a goodly number of his carefully copied manuscripts had issued from the offices of various periodicals in the form of waste paper. Strange to say, he was not discouraged by these failures. The satisfaction, so far as he had known any, had consisted in the writing down of his views; and though he wished it were possible to turn his ink-stained pages into money, his natural detestation of all business transactions whatsoever made him extremely philosophical in repeated failure. Even in regard to his daily drudgery, which was regularly paid, the least pleasant moment was the one when he had to begin his round

from one newspaper cashier to another to receive the little cheques which made him independent of his father so far as his only luxuries of new books and tobacco were concerned. Pride, indeed, was now at the bottom of his resolution to continue in the uninteresting course that had been opened before him. Having once succeeded in buying for himself what he wanted or needed beyond his daily bread, he would have been ashamed to ever go again for pocket-money to his father.

The nature of his occupation, which he would not relinquish, was beginning to produce its natural effect upon his character. He felt that he was better than his work, and the inevitable result ensued. He felt that he was hampered and tied, and that every hour spent in such labour was a page stolen from the book of his reputation ; that he was giving for a pitiful wage the precious time in which something important might have been accomplished, and that his life would turn out a failure if it continued to run on much longer in the same groove. And yet he assumed that it would be absolutely impossible for him to abandon his drudgery in order to devote himself solely to the series of essays on which he had pinned his hopes of success. His serious work, as he called it, made little progress when interrupted at every step by the necessity for writing twaddle about trash.

It may be objected that George Wood should not have written twaddle, but should have employed his best energies in the improvement of second-class literature by systematically telling the truth about it. Unfortunately the answer to such a stricture is not far to seek. If he had written what he thought, the newspapers would have ceased to employ him ; not that it is altogether impossible to write honestly about the great rivers of minor books which flow east and west and north and south from the publishers' gardens, but because the critic who has the age, experience, and talent to bestow faint praise without inflicting damnation commands a high price and cannot be wasted on little authors and their little publications. The beginner often knows that he is writing twaddle and regrets it, and he very likely knows how to write in strains of enthusiastic eulogium or of viciously cruel abuse ; but though he have all these things, he has not yet acquired the unaffected charity which covers a multitude of sins, and which is the result of an ancient and wise good feeling entertained between editors, publishers and critics. He cannot really feel mildly well disposed towards a book he despises, and his only chance of expressing gentle sentiments not his own lies in the

plentiful use of unmitigated twaddle. If he remains a critic, he is either lifted out of the sphere of the daily saleable trash to that of serious first-class literature, or else he imbibes through the pores of his soul such proportional parts of the editor's and the publisher's wishes as shall combine in his own character and produce the qualities which they both desire to find there and to see expressed in his paragraphs.

It could not be said that George Wood was discontented with what he found to do, so much as with being constantly hindered from doing something better. And that better thing which he would have done, and believed that he could have done, was in reality far from having reached the stage of being clearly defined. He had never felt any strong liking for fiction, and his mind had been nourished upon unusually solid intellectual food, while the outward circumstances of his life had necessarily left much to his imagination which to most young men of five-and-twenty is already matter of experience. As a boy he had been too much with older people, and had therefore thought too much to be boyish. Possibly, too, he had seen more than was good for him, for his father had left him but a short time at school in the days of their prosperity, and, being unable to leave New York for any length of time, had more than once sent him abroad with an elderly tutor from whom the lad had acquired all sorts of ideas that were too big for him. He had been wrongly supposed to be of a delicate constitution too, and had been indulged in all manner of intellectual whims and fancies, whereby he had gained a smattering of many sciences and literatures at an age when he ought to have been following a regular course of instruction. Then, before he was thought old enough to enter a university, the crash had come.

Jonah Wood was far too conscientious a man not to sacrifice whatever he could for the completion of his son's education. For several years he deprived himself of every luxury, in order that George might have the assistance he so greatly needed while making his studies at Columbia College in his native city. Then only did the father realise how he had erred in allowing the boy to receive the desultory and aimless teaching that had seemed so generous in the days of wealth. He knew more or less well a variety of subjects of which his companions were wholly ignorant, but he was utterly unversed in much of their knowledge. And this was not all, for George had acquired from his former tutor a misguided contempt for the accepted manner of dealing with cer-

tain branches of learning, without possessing that grasp of the matters in hand which alone justifies a man in thinking differently from the great mass of his fellows. It is not well to ridicule the American method of doing things until one is master of some other.

It was from the time when George entered college that he began to be a constant source of disappointment to his father. The elderly man had received a good, old-fashioned, thoroughly prejudiced education, and though he remembered little Latin and less Greek, he had not forgotten the way in which he had been made to learn both. George's way of talking about his studies disturbed his father's sense of intellectual propriety, which was great, without exciting his curiosity, which was infinitesimally small. With him also prevailed the paternal view which holds that young men must necessarily distinguish themselves above their companions if they really possess any exceptional talent, and his peace of mind was further endangered by his sense of responsibility for George's beginnings. If he had believed that George was stupid, he would have resigned himself to that dispensation of Providence. But he thought otherwise. The boy was not an ordinary boy, and if he failed to prove it by taking prizes in competition, he must be lazy or his preparation must have been defective. No other alternative was to be found, and the fault therefore lay either with himself or with his father.

George never obtained a prize, and barely passed his examinations at all. Jonah Wood made a point of seeing all his examiners as well as the instructors who had known him during his college life. Three-quarters of the number asserted that the young fellow was undeniably clever, and added, expressing themselves with professorial politeness, that his previous studies seemed to have taken a direction other than that of the college 'curriculum,' as they called it. The professor of Greek presumed that George might have distinguished himself in Latin, the professor of Latin surmised that Greek might have been his strong point; both believed that he had talent for mathematics, while the mathematician remarked that he seemed to have a very good understanding, but that it would be turned to better account in the pursuit of classical studies. Jonah Wood returned to his home very much disturbed in mind, and from that day his anxiety steadily increased. As it became more clear that his son would never accept a business career, but would probably waste his opportunities in literary dabbling, the good man's alarm became extreme. He

did not see that George's one true talent lay in his ready power of assimilating unfamiliar knowledge by a process of intuition that escapes methodical learners, any more than he understood that the boy's one solid acquirement was the power of using his own language. He was not to be too much blamed, perhaps, for the young man himself was only dimly conscious of his yet undeveloped power. What made him write was neither the pride of syntax nor the certainty of being right in his observations; he was driven to paper to escape from the torment of the desire to express something, he knew not what, which he could express in no other way. He found no congenial conversation at home and little abroad, and yet he felt that he had something to say and must say it.

It should not be supposed that either Jonah Wood's misfortunes or his poverty, which was after all comparative, though hard to bear, prevented George from mixing in the world with which he was connected by his mother's birth, and to some extent by his father's former position. The old gentleman, indeed, was too proud to renew his acquaintance with people who had thought him dishonourable until he had proved himself spotless; but the very demonstration of his uprightness had been so convincing and clear that it constituted a patent of honour for his son. Many persons who had blamed themselves for their hasty judgment would have been glad to make amends by their cordial reception of the man they had so cruelly mistaken. George, however, was quite as proud as his father, and much more sensitive. He remembered well enough the hard-hearted, boyish stare he had seen in the eyes of some of his companions when he was but just seventeen years old; and later, at college, when his father's self-sacrifice was fully known, and his old associates had held out their hands to his in the hope of making everything right again, George had met them with stony eyes and scornful civility. It was not easy to forgive, and with all his excellent qualities and noble honesty of purpose, Jonah Wood was not altogether displeased to know that his son held his head high and drew back from the renewal of fair-weather friendships. Almost against his will he encouraged him in his conduct, while doing his best to appear at least indifferent.

George needed but little encouragement to remain in social obscurity, though he was conscious of a rather contemptible hope that he might one day play a part in society, surrounded by all the advantages of wealth and general respect which belong especi-

ally to those few who possess both, by inheritance rather than as a result of their own labours. He was not quite free from that subtle aristocratic taint which has touched so many members of American society. Like the wind, no man can tell whence it comes nor whither it goes; but, unlike the ill wind in the proverb, it blows no good to any one. It is not the breath of that republican inequality which is caused by two men extracting a different degree of advantage from the same circumstances; it is not the inevitable inequality produced by the inevitable struggle for existence, wealth and power; but it is the fictitious inequality caused by the pretence that the accident of a man's birth should of itself constitute for him a claim to have special opportunities made for him, adapted to his use and protected by law for his particular benefit. It is a fallacy which is in the air, and which threatens to produce evil consequences wherever it becomes localised.

Perhaps, at some future time yet far distant, a man will arise who shall fathom and explain the great problems presented by human vanity. No more interesting study could be found wherewith to occupy the greatest mind, and assuredly none in the pursuit of which a man would be so constantly confronted by new and varied matter for research. One main fact at least we know. Vanity is the boundless, circumambient and all-penetrating ether in which all man's thoughts and actions have being and receive manifestation. All moral and intellectual life is either full of it and in sympathy with it, breathing it as our bodies breathe the air, or is out of balance with it in the matter of quantity, and is continually struggling to restore its own lost equilibrium. It is as impossible to conceive of anything being done in the world without also conceiving the element of vanity as the medium for the action, as it is to imagine motion without space, or time without motion. To say that any man who succeeds in the race for superiority of any sort is without vanity, is downright nonsense; to assert that any man can reach success without it, would be to state more than any one has yet been able to prove. Let us accept the fact that we are all vain, whether we be saints or sinners, men of action or men of thought, men who leave our sign-manual upon the page of our little day or men who trudge through the furrows of a nameless life ploughing and sowing that others may reap and eat and be merry. After all, does not our conception of heaven suggest to us a life from which all vanity is absent, and does not our idea of hell show us an existence in which vanity reigns

supreme and hopeless, without prospect of satisfaction? Let us at least strive that our vanity may neither do injury to our fellow-men nor recoil and become ridiculous in ourselves.

Enough has been said to define and explain the character and life of the young man whose history this work is to relate. He himself was far from being conscious of all his virtues, faults, and capabilities. He neither knew his own energy nor was aware of the hidden enthusiasm which was only just beginning to make itself felt as a vague, uneasy longing for something that should surpass ordinary things. He did not know that he possessed singular talents as well as unusual defects. He had not even begun to look upon life as a problem offered him for solution, and upon his own heart as an object for his own study. He scarcely felt that he had a heart at all, nor knew where to look for it in others. His life was not happy, and yet he had not tasted the bitter sources of real unhappiness. He was oppressed by his surroundings, but he could not have told what he would have done with the most untrammelled liberty. He despised money, he worked for a pittance, and yet he secretly longed for all that money could buy. He was profoundly attached to his father, and yet he found the good man's company intolerable. He shrank from a society in which he might have been a welcome guest, and yet he dreamed of playing a great part in it some day. He believed himself cynical when he was in reality quixotic, his idols of gold were hidden behind images of clay, and he really cared little for those things which he had schooled himself to admire the most. He fancied himself a critic when he was foredestined by his nature and his circumstances to become an object of criticism to others. He forced his mind to do what it found least congenial, not acting in obedience to any principle or idea of duty, but because he was sure that he knew his own abilities, and that no other path lay open to success. He was in the darkest part of the transition which precedes development, for he was in that period during which a man makes himself imagine that he has laid hold on the thread of the future, while something he will not heed warns him that the chaos is wilder than ever before. In the dark hour before manhood's morning he was journeying resolutely away from the coming dawn.

CHAPTER II

'It is very sad,' observed Mrs. Sherrington Trimm thoughtfully. 'Their mother died in London last autumn, and now they are quite alone—nobody with them but an aunt, or something like that—poor girls! I am so glad they are rich, at least. You ought to know them.'

'Ought I?' asked the visitor who was drinking his tea on the other side of the fireplace. 'You know I do not go into society.'

'The girls go nowhere either. They are still in mourning. You ought to know them. Who knows, you might marry one or the other.'

'I will never marry a fortune.'

'Do not be silly, George!'

The relationship between the two speakers was not very close. George Winton Wood's mother had been a second cousin of Mrs. Sherrington Trimm's, and the two ladies had not been on very friendly terms with each other. Moreover, Mrs. Trimm had nothing to do with old Jonah Wood, the father of the young man with whom she was now speaking, and Jonah Wood refused to have anything to do with her. Nevertheless she called his son by his first name, and the latter usually addressed her as 'Cousin Totty.' An examination of Mrs. Sherrington Trimm's baptismal certificate would have revealed the fact that she had been christened Charlotte, but parental fondness had made itself felt with its usual severity in such cases, and before she was a year old she had been labelled with the comic diminutive which had stuck to her ever since, through five-and-twenty years of maidenhood, and twenty years more of married life. On her visiting cards and in her formal invitations she appeared as Mrs. Sherrington Trimm; but the numerous members of New York society who were related to her by blood or marriage called her 'Totty' to her face, while those who claimed no connection called her 'Totty' behind her back; and though she may live beyond threescore years and ten, and though her strength come to sorrow and weakness, she will be 'Totty' still, to the verge of the grave, and beyond, even after she is comfortably laid away in the family vault at Greenwood.

After all, the name was not inappropriate, so far at least as Mrs. Trimm's appearance was concerned; for she was very smooth, and round, and judiciously plump, short, fair, and neatly made,

with pretty little hands and feet ; active and not ungraceful, sleek but not sleepy ; having small, sharp blue eyes, a very obliging and permanent smile, a diminutive pointed nose, salmon-coloured lips, and perfect teeth. Her good points did not, indeed, conceal her age altogether, but they obviated all necessity for an apology to the world for the crime of growing old ; and those features which were less satisfactory to herself were far from being offensive to others.

She bore in her whole being and presence the stamp of a comfortable life. There is nothing more disturbing to society than the forced companionship of a person who either is, or looks, uncomfortable, in body, mind, or fortune, and many people owe their popularity almost solely to a happy faculty of seeming always at their ease. It is certain that neither birth, wealth, nor talent will of itself make man or woman popular, nor even when all three are united in the possession of one individual ; but, on the other hand, they are not drawbacks to social success, provided they are merely means to the attainment of that unobtrusively careless good humour which the world loves. Mrs. Sherrington Trimm knew this. If not talented, she possessed at all events a pedigree and a fortune ; and as for talent, she looked upon culture as an hereditary disease peculiar to Bostonians, and though not contagious, yet full of danger, inasmuch as its presence in a well-organised society must necessarily be productive of discomfort. All the charm of general conversation must be gone, she thought, when a person appeared who was both able and anxious to set everybody right. She even went so far as to say that, if everybody were poor, it would be very disagreeable to be rich. She never wished to do what others could not do ; she only aimed at being among the first to do what everybody would do by-and-by, as a matter of course.

Mrs. Trimm's cousin George did not understand this point of view as yet, though he was beginning to suspect that 'Totty and her friends'—as he generally designated society—must act upon some such principle. He was only five-and-twenty years of age, and could hardly be expected to be in the secrets of a life he had hitherto seen as an outsider ; but he differed from Totty and her friends in being exceedingly clever, exceedingly unhappy, and exceedingly full of aspirations, ambitions, fancies, ideas and thoughts ; in being poor instead of rich ; and, lastly, in being the son of a man who had failed in the pursuit of wealth, and who could not prove even the most distant relationship to any one of the gentle-

men who had signed the Declaration of Independence, fought in the Revolution, or helped to frame the Constitution of the United States. George, indeed, possessed these ancestral advantages through his mother; and in a more serviceable form through his relationship to Totty; but she, on her part, felt that the burden of his cleverness might be too heavy for her to bear, should she attempt to launch him upon her world. Her sight was keen enough, and she saw at a glance the fatal difference between George and other people. He had a habit of asking serious questions, and of saying serious things, which would be intolerable at a dinner party. He was already too strong to be put down, he was not yet important enough to be shown off. Totty's husband, who was an eminent lawyer, occasionally asked George to dine with him at his club, and usually said, when he came home, that he could not understand that boy; but, being of an inquiring disposition, Mr. Trimm was impelled to repeat the hospitality at intervals that gradually became more regular. At first he had feared that the dark, earnest face of the young man, and his grave demeanour, concealed the soul of a promising prig, a social article which Sherrington Trimm despised and loathed. He soon discovered, however, that these apprehensions were groundless. From time to time his companion gave utterance to some startling opinion or freezing bit of cynicism which he had evidently been revolving in his thoughts for a long time, and which forced Mr. Trimm's gymnastic intelligence into thinking more seriously than usual. Doubtless George's remarks were often paradoxical and youthfully wild, but his hearer liked them none the less for that. Keen and successful in his own profession, he scented afar the capacity for success in other callings. Accustomed by the habits and pursuits of his own exciting life to judge men and things quickly, he recognised in George another mode of the force to which he himself owed his reputation. To lay down the law and determine the precise manner in which that force should be used was another matter, and one in which Sherrington Trimm did not propose to meddle. More than once, indeed, he asked George what he meant to do in the world, and George answered, with a rather inappropriate look of determination, that he believed himself good for nothing, and that when there was no more bread and butter at home he should doubtless find his own level by going up long ladders with a hod of bricks on his shoulder. Mr. Trimm's jovial face usually expressed his disbelief in such theories by a bland smile as he poured out another glass of wine for his young guest.

He felt sure that George would do something, and George, who got little sympathy in his life, understood his encouraging certainty, and was grateful.

Mrs. Trimm, however, shared her cousin's asserted convictions about himself so far as to believe that, unless something was done for him, he might actually be driven to manual labour for support. She assuredly had no faith in general cleverness as a means of subsistence for young men without fortune, and yet she felt that she ought to do something for George Wood. There was a good reason for this beneficent instinct. Her only brother was chiefly responsible for the ruin that had overtaken John Wood when George was still a boy, and she herself had been one of the winners in the game, or at least had been a sharer with her brother in the winnings. It is true that the facts of the case had never been generally known, and that George's father had been made to suffer unjustly in his reputation after being plundered of his wealth; but Mrs. Trimm was not without a conscience, any more than the majority of her friends. If she loved money and wanted more of it, this was because she wished to be like other people, and not because she was vulgarly avaricious. She was willing to keep what she had, though a part of it should have been George's and was ill gotten. She wished her brother, Thomas Craik, to keep all he possessed until he should die, and then she wished him to leave it to her, Charlotte Sherrington Trimm. But she also desired that George should have compensation for what his father had lost, and the easiest and least expensive way of providing him with money he had not was to help him to a rich marriage. It was not, indeed, fitting that he should marry her only daughter, Mamie, though the girl was nineteen years old and showed a disquieting tendency to like George. Such a marriage would result only in a transfer of wealth without addition or multiplication, which was not the form of magnanimity most agreeable to Cousin Totty's principles. There were other rich girls in the market; one of them might be interested in the tall young man with the dark face and the quiet manner, and might bestow herself upon him, and endow him with all her worldly goods. Totty had now been lucky enough to find two such young ladies together, orphans both, and both of age, having full control of the large and equally divided patrimony they had lately inherited. Better still, they were reported to be highly gifted and fond of clever people, and she herself knew that they were both pretty. She had resolved that George should know

them without delay, and had sent for him as a preliminary step towards bringing about the acquaintance. George met her at once with the plain statement that he would never marry money, as the phrase goes, but she treated his declaration of independence with appropriate levity.

‘Do not be silly, George!’ she exclaimed with a little laugh.

‘I am not,’ George answered, in a tone of conviction.

‘Oh, I know you are clever enough,’ retorted his cousin. ‘But that is quite a different thing. Besides, I was not thinking seriously of your marrying.’

‘I guessed as much, from the fact of your mentioning it,’ observed the young man quietly.

Mrs. Trimm stared at him for a moment, and then laughed again.

‘Am I never thinking seriously of what I am saying?’

‘Tell me about these girls,’ said George, avoiding an answer. ‘If they are rich and unmarried, they must be old and hideous——’

‘They are neither.’

‘Mere children, then——’

‘Yes—they are younger than you.’

‘Poor little things! I see—you want me to play with them, and teach them games and things of that sort. What is the salary? I am open to an engagement in any respectable calling. Or perhaps you would prefer Mrs. Macwhirter, my old nurse. It is true that she is blind of one eye and limps a little, but she would make a reduction in consideration of her infirmities, if money is an object.’

‘Try and be serious; I want you to know them.’

‘Do I look like a man who wastes time in laughing?’ inquired George, whose imperturbable gravity was one of his chief characteristics.

‘No—you have other resources at your command for getting at the same result.’

‘Thanks. You are always flattering. When am I to begin amusing your little friends?’

‘To-day, if you like. We can go to them at once.’

George Wood glanced down almost unconsciously at the clothes he wore, with the habit of a man who is very poor and is not always sure of being presentable at a moment’s notice. His pre-occupation did not escape Cousin Totty, whose keen instinct penetrated his thoughts and found there an additional incentive to the

execution of her beneficent intentions. It was a shame, she thought, that any relation of hers should need to think of such miserable details as the possession of a decent coat and whole shoes. At the present moment, indeed, George was arrayed with all appropriate correctness, but Totty remembered to have caught sight of him sometimes when he was evidently not expecting to meet any acquaintance, and she had noticed on those occasions that his dress was very shabby indeed. It was many years since she had seen his father, and she wondered whether he, too, went about in old clothes, sure of not meeting anybody he knew. The thought was not altogether pleasant, and she put it from her. It was a part of her method of life not to think disagreeable thoughts, and though her plan to bring about a rich marriage for her cousin was but a scheme for quieting her conscience, she determined to believe that she was putting herself to great inconvenience out of spontaneous generosity, for which George would owe her a debt of lifelong gratitude.

George, having satisfied himself that his appearance would pass muster, and realising that Totty must have noticed his self-inspection, immediately asked her opinion.

‘Will I do?’ he asked with an odd shade of shyness, and glancing again at the sleeve of his coat, as though to explain what he meant, well knowing that all explanation was unnecessary.

Totty, who had thoroughly inspected him before proposing that they should go out together, now pretended to look him over with a critical eye.

‘Of course—perfectly,’ she said after three or four seconds. ‘Wait for me a moment, and I will get ready,’ she added, as she rose and left the room.

When George was alone, he leaned back in his comfortable chair and looked at the familiar objects about him with a weary expression which he had not worn while his cousin had been present. He could not tell exactly why he came to see Cousin Totty, and he generally went home after his visits to her with a vague sense of disappointment. In the first place, he always felt that there was a sort of disloyalty in coming at all. He knew the details of his father’s past life, and was aware that old Tom Craik had been the cause of his ruin, and he guessed that Totty had profited by the same catastrophe, since he had always heard that her brother managed her property. He even fancied that Totty was not so harmless as she looked, and that she was very fond of money, though he was astonished at his own boldness in suspect-

ing the facts to be so much at variance with the outward appearance. He was very young, and he feared to trust his own judgment, though he had a conviction that his instincts were right. On the whole he was forced to admit to himself that there were many reasons against his periodical visits to the Trimms, and he was quite ready to allow that it was not Totty's personality or conversation that attracted him to the house. Yet, as he rested in the cushioned chair he had selected and felt the thick carpet under his feet, and breathed that indefinable atmosphere which impregnates every corner of a really luxurious house, he knew that it would be very hard to give up the habit of enjoying all these things at regular intervals. He imagined that his thoughts liquefied and became more mobile under the genial influence, forgetting the grooves and moulds so unpleasantly familiar to them. Hosts of ideas and fancies presented themselves to him, which he recognised as belonging to a self that only came to life from time to time; a self full of delicate sensations and endowed with brilliant powers of expression; a self of which he did not know whether to be ashamed or proud; a self as overflowing with ready appreciation as his other common daily self was inclined to depreciate all that the world admired, and to find fault with everything that was presented to its view. Though conscious of all this, however, George did not care to analyse his own motives too closely. It was disagreeable to his pride to find that he attached so much importance to what he described collectively as furniture and tea. He was disappointed with himself, and he did all in his power not to increase his disappointment. Then an extreme depression came upon him, and showed itself in his face. He felt impelled to escape from the house, to renounce the visit Totty had proposed, to go home, get into his oldest clothes, and work desperately at something, no matter what. But for his cousin's opportune return, he might have yielded to the impulse. She re-entered the room briskly, dressed for walking, and smiling as usual. George's expression changed as he heard the latch move in the door, and Mrs. Sherrington Trimm must have been even keener than she was to guess what had been passing in his mind. She was not, however, in the observant mood, but in the subjective, for she felt that she was now about to appear as her cousin's benefactress, and, having got rid of her qualms of conscience, she experienced a certain elation at her own skill in the management of her soul.

George took his hat and rose with alacrity. There was nothing essentially distasteful to him in the prospect of being presented to

a pair of pretty sisters, who had doubtless been warned of his coming, and his foolish longing for his old clothes and his work disappeared as suddenly as it had come.

The low afternoon sun fell across the avenue from the westward streets in broad golden patches. It was still winter, but promise of spring was already in the air, and a faint mist hung about the vanishing-point of the seemingly endless rows of buildings. The trees were yet far from budding, but the leafless branches no longer looked dead, and the small twigs were growing smooth and glossy with the returning circulation of the sap. There were many people on foot in the avenue, and Totty constantly nodded and smiled to her passing acquaintances, who generally looked with some interest at George as they acknowledged or forestalled his companion's salutation. He knew a few of them by sight, but not one passed with whom he had ever spoken, and he felt somewhat foolishly ashamed of not knowing every one. When he was alone the thought did not occur to him, but his cousin's incessant smiles and nods made him realise vividly the difference between her social position and his own. He wondered whether the gulf would ever be bridged over, and whether at any future time those very correct people who now looked at him with inquiring eyes would be as anxious to know him and be recognised by him as they now seemed desirous of knowing Totty and being saluted by her.

'Do you mean to say that you really remember the names of all these friends of yours?' he asked presently.

'Why not? I have known most of them since I was a baby, and they have known me. You could learn their names fast enough if you would take the trouble.'

'Why should I? They do not want me. I should never be a part of their lives.'

'Why not? You could if you liked, and I am always telling you so. Society never wants anybody who does not want it. It is founded on the principle of giving and receiving in return. If you show that you like people, they will show that they like you.'

'That would depend upon my motives.'

Mrs. Sherrington Trimm laughed, and turned her head so that she could see George's face.

'Motives!' she exclaimed. 'Nobody cares about your motives, provided you have good manners. It is only in business that people talk about motives.'

'Then any adventurer who chose might take his place in society,' objected George.

'Of course he might—and does. It occurs constantly, and nothing unpleasant happens to him, unless he makes love in the wrong direction or borrows money without returning it. Unfortunately those are just the two things most generally done by adventurers, and then they come to grief. A man is taken at his own valuation in society, until he commits a social crime and is found out.'

'You think there would be nothing to prevent my going into society if I chose to try it?'

'Nothing in the world, if you will follow one or two simple rules.'

'And what may they be?' inquired George, becoming interested.

'Let me see—in the first place—dear me! how hard it is to explain such things! I should say that one ought never to ask a question about anybody, unless one knows the answer, and knows that the person to whom one is speaking will be glad to talk about the matter. One may avoid a deal of awkwardness by not asking a man about his wife, for instance, if she has just applied for a divorce. But if his sister is positively engaged to marry an English duke, you should always ask about her. That kind of conversation makes things pleasant.'

'I like that view,' said George. 'Give me some more advice.'

'Never say anything disagreeable about any one you know.'

'That is charitable, at all events.'

'Of course it is; and, now I think of it, charity is really the foundation of good society,' continued Mrs. Trimm very sweetly.

'You mean a charitable silence, I suppose.'

'Not always silence. Saying kind words about people you hate is charitable, too.'

'I should call it lying,' George observed.

Totty was shocked at such bluntness.

'That is far too strong language,' she answered, beginning to look as she did in church.

'Gratuitous mendacity,' suggested her companion. 'Is the word "lie" in the swearing dictionary?'

'Perhaps not—but, after all, George,' continued Mrs. Trimm with sudden fervour, 'there are often very nice things to be said quite truly about people we do not like, and it is certainly chari-

table and magnanimous to say them in spite of our personal feelings. One may just as well leave out the disagreeable things.'

'Satan is a fallen angel. You hate him, of course. If he chanced to be in society you would leave out the detail of the fall and say that Satan is an angel. Is that it?'

'Approximately,' laughed Totty, who was less shocked at the mention of the devil than at hearing tact called lying. 'I think you would succeed in society. By the bye, there is another thing. You must never talk about culture and books and such things, unless some celebrity begins it. That is most important, you know. Of course you would not like to feel that you were talking of things which other people could not understand, would you?'

'What should I talk about, then?'

'Oh—people, of course, and—and horses and things—yachting and fashions and what people generally do.'

'But I know so few people,' objected George, 'and as for horses, I have not ridden since I was a boy, and I never was on board of a yacht, and I do not care a straw for the fashions.'

'Well, really, then I hardly know. Perhaps you had better not talk much until you have learned about things.'

'Perhaps not. Perhaps I had better not try society after all.'

'Oh, that is ridiculous!' exclaimed Mrs. Trimm, who did not want to discourage her pupil. 'Now, George, be a good boy, and do not get such absurd notions into your head. You are going to begin this very day.'

'Am I?' inquired the young man in a tone that promised very little.

'Of course you are. And it will be easy, too, for the Fearing girls are clever——'

'Does that mean that I may talk about something besides horses, fashions, and yachting?'

'How dreadfully literal you are, George! I did not mean precisely those things, only I could think of nothing else just at that moment. I know, yes—you are going to ask if I ever think of anything else. Well, I do sometimes—there, now do be good and behave like a sensible being. Here we are.'

They had reached a large old-fashioned house in Washington Square, which George had often noticed without knowing who lived in it, and which had always attracted him. He liked the quiet neighbourhood, so near the busiest part of the city and yet so completely separated from it, and he often went there alone to sit upon one of the benches under the trees and think of all that

might have been even then happening to him if things had not been precisely what they were. He stood upon the doorstep and rang the bell, wondering at the unexpected turn his day had taken, and wondering what manner of young women these orphan sisters might be, with whom Cousin Totty was so anxious to make him acquainted. His curiosity on this head was soon satisfied. In a few seconds he found himself in a sombrely furnished drawing-room, bowing before two young girls, while Mrs. Trimm introduced him.

‘Mr. Winton Wood—my cousin George, you know. You got my note? Yes—so sweet of you to be at home. This is Miss Constance Fearing, and this is Miss Grace, George. Thanks, no—we have just been having tea. Yes—we walked. The weather is perfectly lovely, and now tell me all about yourself, Conny dear!’

Thereupon Mrs. Sherrington Trimm took Miss Constance Fearing beside her, held her hand affectionately, and engaged in an animated conversation of smiles and questions, leaving George to amuse the younger sister as best he could.

At first sight there appeared to be a strong resemblance between the two girls, which was much increased by their both being dressed in black and in precisely the same manner. They were very nearly of the same age, Constance being barely twenty-two years old and her sister just twenty, though Mrs. Trimm had said that both had reached their majority. Both were tall, graceful girls, well proportioned in every way, easy in their bearing, their heads well set upon their shoulders, altogether well grown and well bred. But there was in reality a marked difference between them. Constance was fairer and more delicate than her younger sister, evidently less self-reliant and probably less strong. Her eyes were blue and quiet, and her hair had golden tinges not to be found in Grace’s dark-brown locks. Her complexion was more transparent, her even eyebrows less strongly marked, her sensitive lips less firm. Of the two she was evidently the more gentle and feminine. Grace’s voice was deep and smooth, whereas Constance spoke in a higher though a softer key. It was easy to see that Constance would be the one more quickly moved by womanly sympathies and passions, and that Grace, on the contrary, would be at once more obstinate and more sure of herself.

George was pleasantly impressed by both from the first, and especially by the odd contrast between them and their surround-

ings. The house was old-fashioned within as well as without. It was clear that the girls' father and mother had been conservatives of the most severe type. The furniture was dark, massive, and imposing; the velvet carpet displayed in deeper shades of claret, upon a claret-coloured ground, that old familiar pattern formed by four curved scrolls which inclose as in a lozenge an imposing nosegay of almost black roses. Full-length portraits of the family adorned the walls, and the fireplace was innocent of high-art tiles, being composed of three slabs of carved white marble, two upright and one horizontal, in the midst of which a black grate supported a coal fire. Moreover, as in all old houses in New York, the front drawing-room communicated with a second at the back of the first by great polished mahogany folding-doors, which, being closed, produce the impression that one-half of the room is a huge press. There were stiff sofas set against the wall, stiff corner bookcases filled with histories expensively bound in dark tree calf, a stiff mahogany table under an even stiffer chandelier of gilded metal; there were two or three heavy easy-chairs, square, dark and polished like everything else, and covered with red velvet of the same colour as the carpet, each having before it a footstool of the old style, curved and made of the same materials as the chairs themselves. A few modern books in their fresh, perishable bindings showed the beginning of a new influence, together with half a dozen magazines and papers, and a work-basket containing a quantity of coloured embroidering silks.

George looked about him as he took his place beside Grace Fearing, and noticed the greater part of the details just described.

'Are you fond of horses, yachting, fashions, and things people generally do, Miss Fearing?' he inquired.

'Not in the least,' answered Grace, fixing her dark eyes upon him with a look of cold surprise.

CHAPTER III.

THE stare of astonishment with which Grace Fearing met George's singular method of beginning a conversation rather disconcerted him, although he had half expected it. He had asked the question while still under the impression of Totty's absurd advice, unable any longer to refrain from communicating his feelings to some one.

'You seem surprised,' he said. 'I will explain. I do not care a straw for any of those things myself, but as we walked here my cousin was giving me a lecture about conversation in society.'

'And she advised you to talk to us about horses?' inquired Miss Grace, beginning to smile.

'No. Not to you. She gave me to understand that you were both very clever, but she gave me a list of things about which a man should talk in general society, and I flatter myself that I have remembered the catalogue pretty accurately.'

'Indeed you have!' This time Grace laughed.

'Yes. And now that we have eliminated horses, yachts, and fashions, by mutual consent, shall we talk about less important things?'

'Certainly. Where shall we begin?'

'With whatever you prefer. What do you like best in the world?'

'My sister,' answered Grace promptly.

'That answers the question, "Whom do you like best——?"'

'Very well, Mr. Wood, and whom do you like best?'

'Myself, of course. Everybody does, except people who have sisters like yours.'

'Are you an egotist, then?'

'Not by intention, but by original sin, and by the fault of fate, which has omitted to give me a sister.'

'Have you no near relations?' Grace asked.

'I have my father.'

'And you are not more fond of him than of yourself?'

'Is one not bound to believe one's father, when he speaks on mature reflection, and is a very good man besides?'

'Yes—I suppose so.'

'Very well. My father says that I love myself better than any one else. That is good evidence, for, as you say, he must be right. How do you know that you love your sister more than yourself?'

'I think I would sacrifice more for her than I would for myself.'

'Then you must be subject to a natural indolence which only affection for another can overcome.'

'I am not lazy,' objected Grace.

'Pardon me. What is a sacrifice, in the common meaning of the word? Giving up something one likes. To make a sacrifice for oneself means to give up something one likes for the sake of

one's own advantage—for instance, to give up sleeping too much, in order to work more. Not to do so is to be lazy. Laziness is a vice. Therefore it is a vice not to sacrifice as much as possible to one's own advantage. Virtue is the opposite of vice. Therefore selfishness is a virtue.'

'What dreadful sophistry!'

'You cannot escape the conclusion that one ought to love oneself at least quite as much as any one else, since to be unwilling to take as much trouble for one's own advantage as one takes for that of other people is manifestly an acute form of indolence, and is therefore vicious and a cardinal sin.'

'Selfishness is certainly a deadly virtue,' retorted Grace.

'Can that be called deadly which provides a man with a living?' asked George.

'That is all sophistry—sophistical chaff, and nothing else.'

'The original sophists made a very good living,' objected George. 'Is it not better to get a living as a sophist than to starve?'

'Do you make a living by it, Mr. Wood?'

No. I am not a lawyer, and times have changed since Gorgias.'

'I may as well tell you,' said Grace, 'that Mrs. Trimm has calumniated me. I am not clever, and I do not know who Gorgias was.'

'I beg your pardon for mentioning him. I only wanted to show off my culture. He is of no importance——'

'Yes, he is. Since you have spoken of him, tell me who he was.'

'A sophist, and one of the first of them. He published a book to prove that Helen of Troy was an angel of virtue, he fattened on the proceeds of his talking and writing, till he was a hundred years old, and then he died. The thing will not do now. Several people have lately defended Lucretia Borgia, without fattening to any great extent. That is the reason I would like to be a lawyer. Lawyers defend living clients and are well paid for it. Look at Sherry Trimm, my cousin's husband. Do you know him?'

'Yes.'

'He is fat and well-liking. And Johnny Bond—do you know him too?'

'Of course,' answered Grace, with an almost imperceptible frown. 'He is to be Mr. Trimm's partner soon.'

'Well, when he is forty, he will be as sleek and round as Sherry Trimm himself.'

'Will he?' asked the young girl with some coldness.

'Probably, since he will be rich and happy. Moral and physical rotundity is the natural attribute of all rich and happy persons. It would be a pity if Johnny grew very fat, he is such a handsome fellow.'

'I suppose it could not be helped,' said Grace indifferently.

'What do you mean by moral rotundity, Mr. Wood?'

'Inward and spiritual grace to be always right.'

At this point Totty, who had said all she had to say to Constance, and was now only anxious to say it all over again to Grace, made a movement and nodded to her cousin.

'Come, George,' she said, 'take my place, and I will take yours.'

George rose with considerable reluctance and crossed the room. There was something in Grace Fearing's manner which gave him courage in conversation, and he had felt at his ease with her. Now, however, the ice must be broken afresh with the other sister. Unlike Mrs. Trimm, he did not want to repeat himself, and he was somewhat embarrassed as to how he should begin in a new strain. To his surprise, however, his new companion relieved him of any responsibility in this direction. While listening as much as was necessary to Totty's rambling talk, she had been watching the young man's face from a distance. Her sympathetic nature made her more observant than her sister, and she spent much time in speculating upon other people's thought. George interested her from the first. There was something about him, of which he himself was wholly unconscious, which distinguished him from ordinary men, and which it was hard to define. Few people would have called him handsome, though no one could have said that he was ugly. His head was strongly modelled, with prominent brows, and great hollows in the temples. The nose was straight, but rather too long, as is generally the case with melancholy people; and the thin dark moustache did not conceal the scornful expression of the mouth. The chin would have been the better for a little more weight and prominence, and the whole face might have been more attractive had it been less dark and thin. As for the rest, the man was tall and well built, though somewhat too lean and angular, and he carried himself well, whether in motion or repose. He was evidently melancholic, nervous, and impressionable, as might be seen from his brown and

sinewy hands, of which the smooth and pointed fingers contrasted oddly with the strength of the lower part. But the most minute description of George Wood's physical characteristics would convey no such impression as he produced upon those who first saw him. He was discontented with himself as well as with his surroundings, and his temper was clouded by perpetual disappointment. Sometimes dull and apathetic, there were moments when a vicious energy gleamed in his dark eyes, and when he looked like what fighting men call an ugly customer. Mirth was never natural to him, and when he laughed there was scarcely the semblance of a smile upon his features. Yet he had a keen sense of humour, and a facility for exhibiting the ridiculous side of things to others.

'What do you do, Mr. Wood?' asked Constance Fearing, when he was seated beside her.

'Nothing—and not even that gracefully.'

Constance did not laugh as she looked at him, for there was something at once earnest and bitter in the way he spoke.

'Why do you do nothing?' she asked. 'Everybody works nowadays. You do not look like a professed idler. I suppose you mean you are studying for a profession.'

'Not exactly. I believe my studies are said to be finished. I sometimes write a little.'

'Is that all? Do you never publish anything?'

'Oh, yes; countless things.'

'Really? I am afraid I cannot remember seeing——'

'My name in print? No. There is but one copy of my published works, and that is in my possession. The pages present an irregular appearance and smell of paste. You do not understand? My valuable performances are occasionally printed in one of the daily papers. I cut them out when I am not too lazy, and keep them in a scrap-book.'

'Then you are a journalist?'

'Not from the journalist's point of view. He calls me a paid contributor; and when I am worse paid than usual, I call him by worse names.'

'I do not understand. If you can be what you call a paid contributor, why not be a journalist? What is the difference?'

'The one is a professional, the other is an amateur. I am the other.'

'Why not be a professional, then?'

'Because I do not like the profession.'

‘What would you like to be? Surely you must have some ambition.’

‘None whatever, I assure you.’ There was an odd look in George’s eyes, not altogether in accordance with his answer. ‘I should prefer to live a student’s life, since I must live a life of some kind. I should like to be always my own master—if you would give me my choice, there are plenty of things I should like. But I cannot have them.’

‘Most of us are in that condition,’ said Constance, rather thoughtfully.

‘Are we? Is there anything in the world that you want and cannot have?’

‘Yes. Many things.’

‘No, I mean concrete things,’ George insisted. ‘Of course I know that you have the correct number of moral and intellectual aspirations. You would like to be a heroine, a saint, and the managing partner of a great charity; you would like to be a scholar, historian, a novelist, and you would certainly like to be a great poetess. You would probably like to lead the fashion in some particular way, for I must allow you a little vanity with so much virtue, but on Sundays, in church, you would like to forget that there are such things as fashions. Of course you would. But all that is not what I mean. When I speak of wants, I mean wants connected with real life. Have you not everything you desire, or could you not have everything? If you do not like New York, can you not go and live in Siberia? If you do not like your house, can you not turn it inside out and upside down and trim it with green parakeet’s wings, if you please? If you have wants, they are moral and intellectual.’

‘But all the things you speak of merely depend upon money,’ said Constance a little shyly. ‘They are merely material wants—or rather, according to your description, caprices.’

‘I do not call my desire to lead the unmolested life of a student either a caprice or a material want, but the accomplishment of my wish depends largely upon money and very little upon anything else.’

Constance looked furtively at her companion, who sat beside her with folded hands, apparently contemplating his shoes. He had spoken very quietly, but his tone was that of the most profound contempt, whether for himself, or for the wealth he was weak enough to desire, it was impossible to say. Constance felt that she was in the presence of a nature she did not understand,

though she was to some extent interested and attracted by it. It is very hard for people who possess everything that money can give, and have always possessed it, to comprehend the effect of poverty upon a sensitive person. Constance, indeed, had no exact idea of George Wood's financial position. He might be really poor, for all she knew, or he might be only relatively impecunious. She inclined to the latter theory, partly because he had not the indescribable look which is supposed to belong to a poor man, and partly on account of his readiness to speak of what he wanted. A person of less keen intuitions would probably have been repelled by what might have been taken for vulgar discontent and covetousness. But Constance Fearing's perceptions were more delicate. She felt instinctively that George was not what he represented himself to be, that he was neither weak, selfish, nor idle, and that those who believed him to be so would before long find themselves mistaken. She made no answer to his last words, however, and there was silence for a few moments.

Then George began to speak of her return to New York, and fell into a very commonplace kind of conversation, which he sustained with an effort, and with a certain sensation of awkwardness. Presently Totty, who had finished the second edition of her small talk, rose from her seat and began the long operation of leave-taking, which was performed with all the usual repetitions, effusive phrases, and affectionalities, if such a word may be coined, which are considered appropriate and indispensable. As a canary bird pecks at a cherry, chirps, skips away, hops back, pecks, chirps, and skips again and again many times, so do certain women say good-bye to the dear friends they visit. Meanwhile George stood at hand, holding his hat and ready to go.

'I hope we shall see you again,' said Constance as she gave him her hand.

'May I come?' he asked.

'Of course. We are generally at home about this time.'

At last Totty tore herself away, and the ponderous front door closed behind her and her cousin as they came out into the purple light that flooded Washington Square.

'Well, George, I hope you were properly impressed,' said Mrs. Sherrington Trimm, when they had walked a few steps and were near the corner of the avenue.

'Profoundly.'

'In what way? Come, be confidential.'

‘In what way? Why, I think that the father and mother of those girls must have been very rich, very dull, and very respectable. I never saw anything like the solidity of the furniture.’

Totty was never quite sure whether George was in earnest or was laughing at her.

‘Did you spend your time in looking at the chairs?’ she asked rather petulantly.

‘Partly. I could not help seeing them. I believe I talked a little.’

‘I hope you were sensible. What did you talk about? I do not think the Fearing girls would thoroughly appreciate the style of wit with which you generally favour me.’

‘You need not be cross, Cousin Totty. I believe I was decently agreeable.’

‘Oh!’ ejaculated Mrs. Trimm.

‘You think I flatter myself, do you? I dare say. The opinion of the young ladies would be more valuable than my own. At all events my conscience does not reproach me with having been more dull than usual, and as for the furniture, you will admit that it was very impressive.’

‘Well,’ sighed Totty, ‘I suppose that is your way of looking at things.’

She did not know exactly what she wanted him to say, but she was sure that he had not said it, and that his manner was most unsatisfactory. They walked on in silence.

‘I am tired,’ she said at last, as they reached the corner of the Brevoort House. ‘I will go home in a cab. Good-bye.’

George opened the door of one of the numerous broughams stationed before the hotel and helped his cousin to get in. She nodded rather indifferently to him as she was driven away, and left him somewhat at a loss to account for her sudden ill temper. Under any ordinary circumstances she would assuredly have bid him enter the carriage with her and drive as far as her house, in order to save him a part of the long distance to his own home. The young man stood still for a moment and then turned into Clinton Place, walking rapidly in the direction of the elevated road.

He had spoken quite truly when he had said that the visit he had just made had produced a profound impression on him, and it was in accordance with his character to keep that impression to himself. It was not that he felt himself attracted by either one

of the sisters more than by the other. He had not fallen in love at first sight, nor lost his heart to a vision of beatitude that had only just received a name. But as he walked, he saw constantly before him the two graceful young girls in their simple black dresses, full of the freshness and beauty of early youth and contrasting so strongly with their old-fashioned surroundings. That was all; but the picture stirred in him that restless, disquieting longing for something undefined, for a logical continuation of the two lives he had thus glanced upon, which belongs to persons of unusual imagination, and which, sooner or later, drives them to the writing of books as to the only possible satisfaction of an intimate and essential want.

There are people who, when they hear any unusual story of real life, exclaim, 'What a novel that would make!' They are not the people who write good fiction. Most of them have never tried it, for, if they had, they would know that novels are not made by expanding into a volume or volumes the account of circumstances which have actually occurred. True stories very rarely have a conclusion at all, and the necessity for a conclusion is the first thing felt by the born novelist. He dwells upon the memory of people he has seen, only for the sake of imagining a sequel and end to their lives. Before he has discovered that he must write books to satisfy himself, he does not understand the meaning of the moods to which he is subject. He is in a room full of people, perhaps, and listening to a conversation. Suddenly a word or a passing face arrests his attention. He loses the thread of the talk, and his thoughts fly off at a tangent with intense activity. As before the sight of a drowning man the panorama of a life is unfolded to him in an instant, full of minute details, all distinct and clear. His lips move, repeating fragments of imaginary conversations. His eyes fix themselves, while he sees in his brain sights other than those around him. His heart beats fast, then slowly, in a strange variety of emotions. Then comes the awakening voice of the persecutor. 'A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Tompkins,' or, 'My dear Tompkins, if you do not care to listen to me,' &c. The young man is covered with confusion and apologises for his absence of mind, while still inwardly attempting to fix in his memory the fleeting visions of which he has just enjoyed such a delicious glimpse.

Fortunately for George Wood, there was no one to disturb his meditations as he strode along the quiet street, ascended the iron steps and mechanically paid his fare before passing through the

wicket gate. Nor did the vivid recollection of Constance and Grace Fearing abandon him as the snakelike train came puffing up and stopped before his eyes ; still less, when he had taken his seat, and was being carried away up-town in the direction of his home.

He lived with his father in the small house which the latter still owned, and in which, by dint of rigid economy, the two succeeded in leading a decently comfortable existence, so far as their material lives were concerned. A more complete contrast to the residence in Washington Square, where George had just been spending half an hour, could hardly be imagined. The dwelling of the Woods was one of those conventional little buildings which abound in the great American cities, having a front of about sixteen feet, being three stories high, and having two rooms on each floor, one looking upon the street and one upon a small yard at the back. Within, everything was of the simplest description. There was no attempt at anything in the nature of luxury or embellishment. The well-swept carpets were threadbare, the carefully dusted furniture was of the plainest kind, the smooth, tinted walls were innocent of decoration and unadorned with pictures. There were few books to be seen, except in George's own room, which presented a contrast to the rest of the house, inasmuch as there reigned in it that sort of disorder which seemed the most real order in the opinion of its occupant. A huge deal table took up fully a quarter of the available space, and deal shelves full of books both old and new lined the walls, indeed almost everything was of deal from the uncarpeted floor to the chairs. A pile of new volumes in bright bindings stood on a corner of the table, which was littered with printed papers, sheets of manuscript, galley proofs, and cuttings from newspapers. A well-worn pen-holder lay across a half-written page, and the red cork of a bottle of stylographic ink projected out of the confusion.

George entered this sanctum, and before doing anything else proceeded to divest himself of the clothes he wore, putting on rusty garments that seemed to belong to different epochs. Then he went to the window with something like a sigh of relief. The view was not inspiring, but the familiarity of it doubtless evoked in his mind trains of thought that were pleasant. There was the narrow brick-yard with its Chinese puzzle of crossing and recrossing clothes' lines. Then a brick wall beyond which he could see at a considerable distance the second and third rows of windows of a large house. Above, a row of French roofs and then the winter sky, red with the last rays of the sun. George did not

remain long in contemplation of this prospect ; a glance was apparently enough to restore the disturbed balance of his mind. As he turned away and busied himself with lighting a green glass kerosene lamp, the vision of Constance and Grace Fearing dissolved and gave place to more practical considerations. He sat down and laid hold of the uppermost volume from the pile of new books, instinctively feeling for his paper-cutter with the other hand among the disorderly litter beside him.

After cutting a score of pages, he began to look for the editor's letter. The volumes had been sent him for review, and were accompanied by the usual note, stating with appalling cynicism the number of words he was expected to write as criticism of each production.

'About a hundred words apiece,' wrote the literary editor ; 'and please return the books with the notices on Monday at twelve o'clock, at the latest.'

It was Thursday to-day, and there were six volumes to be read, digested, and written about. George made a short calculation. He must do two each day, on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, in order to leave himself Monday morning as a margin in case of accidents. Six books, six hundred words, or rather more than half a column of the paper for which he wrote. That meant five dollars, for the work was well paid, as being supposed to require some judgment and taste on the part of the writer. There was, of course, nothing of much importance in the heap of gaily bound printed matter, nothing to justify a serious article, and nothing which George would care to read twice. Nevertheless, the exigencies of the book trade must be satisfied, and notices must appear, and editors must find persons willing and able to write such notices at prices varying from fifty cents to a dollar apiece. Nor was there any difficulty about this. George knew that the pay was very good as times went, and that there were dozens of starving old maids and hungry boys who would do the work for less, and would perhaps do it as well as he could. Nor was he inclined to quarrel with the conditions which allowed him so short a time for the accomplishment of such a task. He had worked at second-class reviewing for some time, and was long past the period of surprises. On the contrary, he looked upon the batch of publications with considerable satisfaction. The regularity with which such parcels had arrived during the last few months was a proof that he was doing well, and it seemed probable that in the course of the coming year he might be entrusted with more important

work. Once or twice already he had been instructed to write a column, and those were white days in his recollections. He felt that with a permanent engagement to produce a column a week he should be doing very well, but he knew how hard that was to obtain. No one who has not earned his bread by this kind of labour can have any idea of the crowd that hangs upon the outskirts of professional journalism, a crowd not seeking to enter the ranks of the regular newspaper men, but hoping to pick up the crumbs that fall from the table which appears to them so abundantly loaded. To be a professional journalist in America a man must in nine cases out of ten begin as a reporter. He must possess other qualifications besides those of the literary man. He must have a good knowledge of shorthand writing and a knack for the popular style. He must have an iron constitution and untiring nerves. He must be able to sit in a crowded room under the glaring gaslight and write out his impressions at an hour when ordinary people are in bed and asleep. He must possess that brazen assurance which sensitive men of taste rarely have, for he will be called upon to interview all sorts and conditions of men when they least expect it and generally when they least like it. He must have a keen instinct for business in order to outwit and outrun his competitors in the pursuit of news. Ever on the alert, he must not dwell upon the recollections of yesterday lest they twine themselves into the reports of to-day. Altogether, the commencing journalist must be a remarkable being, and most remarkable for a set of qualities which are not only useless to the writer of books, but which, if the latter possessed them, would notably hinder his success. There is no such thing as amateur journalism possible within the precincts of a great newspaper's offices, whereas the outer doors are besieged by amateurs of every known and unknown description.

In the critical and literary departments, the dilettante is the cruel enemy of those who are driven to write for bread, but who lack either the taste, the qualifications, or the opportunities which might give them a seat within, among the reporters' desks! Cruellest of all in the eyes of the poor scribbler is the well-to-do man of leisure and culture who is personally acquainted with the chief editor, and writes occasional criticisms, often the most important, for nothing. Then there is the young woman who has been to college, who lacks nothing, but is ever ready to write for money, which she devotes to charitable purposes, thereby depriving some unfortunate youth of the dollar a day which means food to

him, for whose support the public is not already taxed. But she knows nothing about him, and it amuses her to be connected with the press, and to have the importance of exchanging a word with the editor if she meets him in the society she frequents. The young man goes on the accustomed day for the new books. 'I have nothing for you this week, Mr. Tompkins,' says the manager of the literary department as politely as possible. The books are gone to the Vassar girl or to the rich idler, and poor Tompkins must not hope to earn his daily dollar again till seven or eight days have passed. His only consolation is that the dawdling dilettante can never get all the work, because he or she cannot write fast enough to supply the demand. Without the spur of necessity it is impossible to read and review two volumes a day for any length of time. It is hard to combine justice to an author with the necessity for rushing through his book at a hundred pages an hour. It is indeed important to cut every leaf, lest the aforesaid literary manager should accuse poor little Mr. Tompkins of carelessness and superficiality in his judgment; but it is quite impossible that Tompkins should read every word of the children's story-book, of the volume of second-class sermons, of the collection of fifth-rate poetry, and of the harrowing tale of city life, entitled 'The Bucket of Blood, or the Washerwoman's Revenge,' all of which have come at once and are simultaneously submitted to his authoritative criticism.

George Wood cut through thirty pages of the volume he held in his hand, then went to the end and cut backwards, then returned to the place he had reached the first time, and cut through the middle of the book. It was his invariable system, and he found that it succeeded very well.

'It is not well done,' he said to himself, quoting Johnson, 'but one is surprised to see it done at all. What can you expect for fifty cents?'

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

SOME OLD ANGLING BOOKS.

AS spring is ycumen in, according to popular superstition—for one sees no signs of it—and as no new book of great interest has come out, we offer this month a few remarks on some old angling books. Two early specimens at least are not generally familiar, Leonard Mascall's *Booke of Fishing with Hooke and Line* (1590) and Taverner's *Certaine Experiments concerning Fish and Fruite* (1600). The others mentioned here are all accessible in reprints, as I would fain make Mascall. Walton is too familiar to need long discourse, but the modesty of his aim has occasionally been overlooked by his critics. In his dedicatory epistle to the *Compleat Angler* Walton says that Sir Henry Wotton intended to have composed a book on the art. Sir Henry died, left the discourse unwritten, and Walton thinks that a good treatise on the subject does not exist in English. For his own book he pretends to no scientific accuracy nor extreme skill. 'I have made myself a recreation of a recreation.' 'I write not for money, but to get pleasure, and *this Discourse boasts of no more*; for I hate to promise much and deceive the reader.' Walton, in fact, probably knew that he himself was rather a bottom fisher, and a dead hand at a chub, than an accomplished angler. His famous 'Jury of Flies' is of no practical value, and is borrowed ill from Dame Juliana Berners. In his dialogue, he never exhibits himself as catching a trout with artificial fly; and as to natural history, a man who says that salmon spawn in April and May will say anything. Walton's charming volume survives because it is 'a picture of my own disposition, especially in such days and times as I have laid aside business, and gone a-fishing with honest Nat and R. Roe; but they are gone, and with them most of my pleasant hours, even as a shadow that passeth away and returns not.' As a shadow they

have passed away, or as a flitting sunbeam, those old days of Old England, when Izaak, far from the strife of troubled times, daped beneath the pendulous willow boughs and heard the milkmaid sing Kit Marlowe's ditty. A better angler than Walton, Richard Franck meanwhile was riding to the Northern wars in steel cap and buff jerkin, but the worse fisherman wrote the more excellent book. Another sportsman, and one more practical than the contemplative Izaak, had published a little discourse of the pastime two years before T. Maxey printed the *Compleat Angler* for Rich. Mariott. This was Thomas Barker, 'an ancient Practitioner,' whose *Art of Angling* is of 1651. Barker was, he tells us, a freeman of Salop, and he lived in King Henry the Seventh's Gifts, the next door to the Gate House, in Westminster. He was already old in 1651. 'Age taketh the pleasure from me with many crosses.' He began his advice to anglers with remarks on trout; he recommends a hazel rod and a hair line, and insists on the necessity of 'keeping out of sight.' Yet he is a down-stream fisher, as were most men then. For bait he prefers the brandling worm or minnow, at which the trout comes 'as a Mastive Dog at a Bear.' 'If you can attain to angle with one hair you shall have the more rises,' for gut was not yet known. Barker is far more learned in flies than Walton. He is fond of palmers. He has various ways of dressing the May fly. 'Some do it with a shammie body.' One night, when 'a Lord sent to me at sun going down to provide him a good dish of trout,' Mr. Barker succeeded by dint of lob-worms, 'angling as I doe with the Flie at the top of the water.' Later, as the heavy air cleared, he succeeded with a white palmer, and in early morning had sport with red and black palmers. He used no reel; 'your lines must be no longer than the rod.' He was successful enough to provide trout, dressed in dozens of ways, for his patron, the 'Lord,' and he kindly teaches us how to 'marrionate' a trout, and 'will warrant them good victual.' In 1657 Barker published a second edition, 'greatly enlarged,' which Walton's publisher brought out 'at his shop in St. Dunstan's Churchyard.'

For forty years I

In ambassadors' kitchens learned my cookery,

says, or sings, Barker. Can he have been cook to that angling ambassador and poet Sir Henry Wotton? Among the many writers of commendatory verses for his second edition John Hockenhall celebrates 'valiant, just, honest, true-hearted Shrewsbury Barker' in English hexameters, not often written, I think,

between Gabriel Harvey's age and that of Mr. Matthew Arnold. Hockenhall prefers Barker's book to those of Ward, Lawson, and Markham. He does not name Mascall. Markham we all know, but who was Lawson, and what is the treatise of Ward? John Dennys, author of a pleasant poem, *The Secrets of Angling* (1613), is omitted by Hockenhall. In his second edition Barker 'shows you the way to take a salmon.' A sixteen-foot rod suffices him, with 'a little wire ring at the upper end of the top for the line to run through.' You must also have your 'winder,' fixed by a spring, which a diagram, to me unintelligible, is supposed to illustrate. The fly is to have 'six wings,' or 'four at least;' 'there is judgement in making these flies.' The line is to be at least twenty-six yards in length; one cannot understand how this short line proved sufficient. Modern salmon sometimes, in angling essays, run out a hundred yards of line, so the angler assures you. Barker now drops into poetry.

My strong line was just twenty-six yards long;
I gave him a turne, though I found him strong;
I wound up my tackle to guide him to shore;
The landing-hook helped much, the cookery more.

He adds a little poetry to his remarks on trout flies.

In the month of May none but the May fly,
'For every month one' is a pitiful lye.

But Walton lent some credit to the fable.

Barker ends by recommending Kirby's hooks, 'sold at Shoe Lane in Harp Alley, in Mill Yard.' I regret to add that he recommends salmon roe as 'the best bait for a trout that I have seen in all my time. If I had known it but twenty years ago I could have gained a hundred pounds only with that bait. I am bound in duty to divulge it to your Honour, and not to carry it to my grave with me.' Would that he had carried salmon roe thither—nay, farther! Barker's book is very rare; a small edition of one hundred copies was printed by Mr. Burn in 1820. Messrs. Darling have published another edition, as limited in the number of copies.

Contemporary with Barker and Walton was Richard Franck, 'philanthropus.' His *Northern Memoirs*, though written in 1658, were not published till 1685. Sir Walter Scott edited this first known book on Scottish angling in 1821. The reprint is common enough; my copy bears the book plate of the famous angler Mr. Thomas Todd Stoddart. Mr. Stoddart did not cut all the pages,

and I do not wonder at it. Franck was an extraordinary character, but the dullest of writers. He seems to have left Cambridge early, at the beginning of the Civil War, in 1641. He carried from his University a great deal of most tedious pedantry, and he added a queer, stupid mysticism of his own devising. He served in the cavalry with Cromwell in Scotland, and there he learned what salmon and sea trout are like. So fascinated was he that, when the Commonwealth grew fractious, he returned to the Scotch rivers and 'the dark lakes that welter them forth.' His *Northern Memoirs* are a kind of dull dialogues, partly occupied with theology, partly with angling. His route took him to Carlisle, thence to Dumfries and the North. Here his companion hooks his first salmon, which leaps, sulks, runs, and being hard held breaks away. He then receives a lesson on 'the secret art of striking, a moderate touch,' and on giving line. The master next raises a fish which comes short, rises again, and is landed. Dumfries was a very dirty town then, and not a moral one. 'Every Sunday some seldom miss to make their appearance on the stool of repentance,' like Robert Burns. Sanquhar, or 'Zanker,' was remarkable for the malignant insects which, according to the traveller, cause Stoney Stratford to be appropriately so named. The traveller went by Kilmarnock, where rain was the only scavenger, to Glasgow. 'There is a college which they call an University.' The linen was clean in Glasgow, and the people were 'decently dressed.' They pass Dumbarton and 'dirty Dumblain,' and many a Highland glen where 'they live like lairds and die like loons, hating to work, and no credit to borrow, so they rob their neighbours.' They fish the Tay, and Franck recommends 'a glittering fly, the body of red twisted silk, intermingled with silver; the wings the dappled feather of a teal.' He then falls foul of our Father Izaak, who 'stuffs his book with morals from Dubravius and others . . . wherewith he stuffs his undigested octavo : so brings himself under the Angler's censure and the common calamity of a plagiarist.' Walton's book was much too successful not to attract the usual charge which lies ready to the hand of literary jealousy. Franck had met Izaak in Stafford, and had attacked him about his absurd theory that the pickerel weed breeds pickerel. The good Izaak fell back on 'Gesner, Dubravius, and Androvandus.' Franck replied with arguments so convincing that 'my Compleat Angler deliberated, drop'd his argument, and leaves Gesner to defend it : so huff'd away.' We may believe that they met no more, 'for,' says Charles Cotton, 'my father

Walton will be seen twice in no man's company he does not like, and likes none but such as he believes to be very honest men.' Now Franck had ridden with Cromwell. Franck adds, what is true, that Walton's remarks on fly-fishing were 'never made practicable by himself, I'm convinced.' Probably Izaak loved neither the politics nor the practice of the Cromwellian salmon fisher. We must all wish, with Sir Walter Scott, that Walton, not Franck, had made the northern tour, and had recorded in the beautiful simplicity of his Arcadian language his observations on the scenery and manners of Scotland. But the road was too long, the rivers too dirty—no lavender there in the linen—and the Gaelic milkmaids were too slatternly for Izaak. We cannot fancy him running down the Awe with a thirty-pound salmon for his guide.

Franck pushed as far north as Strathnaver, and what sport he must have had among the then uneducated Naver salmon! If he would only give us details of his sport we could forgive him his pedantry and his criticism of Izaak; but he is at once verbose and empty. In Strathnaver (where the Sutherland evictions took place) he found 'a rude sort of inhabitants, almost as barbarous as cannibals, who when they kill a beast boil him in his hide, make a caldron of his skin, browis of his bowels, drink of his blood, and bread and meat of his carcase. Some few or none amongst them have hitherto, as yet, understood any better rules or method of eating.' Franck's southern march is even more stupid than his northern journey. No man ever had greater opportunities of catching fish and of writing a good book on angling. But though Franck could certainly fish, and though his taste in salmon flies was creditable to him, he is almost the dullest writer, and infinitely the most tedious teller of long-winded, pointless tales, that ever held a pen. He emigrated to America, and wrote a work called 'Rabbi Moses: a Philosophical Treatise of the Original and Production of Things.' Scott describes it as 'unintelligible,' and probably Scott is the only man who ever tried to read it. However on such subjects as pickerel weed and the barnacle tree Franck is a scientific sceptic compared to Walton. If I have prevented any angler from trying to read the *Northern Memoirs* this brief account of the Cromwellian angler has not been written in vain. It is fair to say that Franck had a generous admiration of the great Montrose. This, with his love of salmon fishing, and skill in the sport, may partly rescue the character of an ineffably prolix and vapid author.

Possibly Walton's success tempted other people to write on

angling, or perhaps the practical English character was not satisfied with his contemplative humour. Whatever the cause, in Walton's lifetime there appeared perhaps the most practical, but assuredly the most superstitious, angling work of the time, 'The Angler's *Vade Mecum*, or a Compendious yet full Discourse of Angling,' by a Lover of Angling. (London: printed for Tho. Bassett, at the 'George,' near St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street. 1681.) It is curious that this site is now occupied by the house of Mr. E. B. Marston's *Fishing Gazette*. The Lover of Angling, in his preface, anticipates 'the common objection of the ignorant,' What needs any more writing in this kind? To this he replies that, coming after other writers, he is like a pigmy on the shoulders of a giant—has the advantage of past experience, and above all does not mean to pad out his book 'by telling you what holy and illustrious persons have been practisers of angling.' This is a hit at Walton. In short, the Lover of Angling drives at practice, not without an oblique hit at Walton's discursive charms. The author asks leave to assume 'the liberty of an Anonymous, many daily taking it for worse ends.'

This writer does not dally over the antiquities of angling and that great spate Deucalion's flood. He starts with remarks on rod-making. Hazel, crab-tree, blackthorn, and yew switches should be cut about December 10, 'that being the only time.' They should be seasoned for fifteen months before they are made up. His cane rod is enormously long—thirteen feet of cane, a top of hazel, and a yard and a half of whalebone, or rather the whalebone and hazel supply a yard and a half between them.

The rod for trout fly-fishing is to be eighteen feet long, made of hazel in several pieces, 'taper and rush-grown like a switch.' A still better plan is to get the arrow-maker to make a rod of deal, with a hazel and whalebone top. The white arrow wood is to be painted of a rich cinnamon colour.' There is no reel; the line is tied to a loop at the end of the top. The line is to be of the best hair, and a yard shorter than the rod. There follow instructions on hooks, plummets, floats, landing-nets, and so forth. Worms, gentles, wasp grubs, and salmon roe, 'a lovely bait,' occupy many pages. Arum berries, cherries, oat cake, and cheese are all baits dear to the Lover of Angling. He has many absurd superstitions about ointment for bait, made of 'man's fat, cat's fat, and mummy finely powdered.' Great Chafra may have been bait to catch chub, if people followed these hideous counsels, and the dust of Queen Taia may have been smeared on brandling worms. The

author, like Walton, believes in gum ivy, and adds this amazing recipe :

Take the Bones or Skull of a Dead Man, at the opening of a Grave, and beat the same into powder, and put of this powder in the Moss wherein you keep your worms ; but others like Grave-earth as well.

These are no deeds for the contemplative man, and Izaak would have read of them with a shudder.

As to playing a fish, have an especial care to keep the rod bent, lest he run to the end of the line, and break either hook or hold. Here, in my copy, some old angler has written on the margin, 'and hale him not to near ye top of the water, least by *flaskering* he break ye line.' Sea trout are particularly addicted to *flaskering* on the surface, and thereby often make their escape.

Times and seasons next occupy the author ; he notes what I have observed in the Test, that 'when people wash their Sheep in summer, at the first time only Fish bite well.' In Scotland I have seen the Shaws burn, which runs into Ettrick, all muddy and covered with dying trout, thanks to the poisonous sheep-dip which the farmer was using. I doubt if our author knew much about the salmon. 'When struck he usually falleth to plunge and leap, but does not ordinarily endeavour to run to the end of the Line, as the Trout will.' He must have changed his habits very much if this was true. The remarks on salmon flies with six wings appear to be borrowed from Walton. As for trout fly-fishing, 'fine and far off and down stream' are the author's maxims. He has a long list of flies—'little red brown,' 'palmer fly,' 'little whirling dun,' 'great blew dun,' 'little black gnat,' 'green drake,' 'black blew dun,' and so forth. His ideas of dressing flies are sufficiently sensible and explicit. This is the less to be marvelled at as the Lover of Angling is, in very truth, what Franck calls Walton, 'a plagiarist,' and has stolen his ideas, and even his language sometimes, from Cotton's addition to the *Compleat Angler*, published in 1676. Cotton was, no doubt, a master in his day and in his way, and wholly contemptuous of that grisly recipe by the Lover of Angling borrowed from the *Pharmacopeia* of 'Monsieur Charras, Operator and Apothecary Royal to the present French King, Lewis the 14.'

It is notable that of all these old writers only Izaak and Cotton, in imitation of him, care to waste a word on the poetry of angling. They are very unlike I. D., Esq., with his *Secrets of Angling* (1613), who sings—

Let them that list these pastimes then pursue,
 And on their pleasing fancies feed their fill,
 So I the Fields and Meadows greene may view,
 And by the Rivers fresh may walke at will
 Among the dayzes and the Violets blew,
 Red Hyacinth and yellow Daffadill,
 Purple Narcissus like the Morning rays,
 Pale Ganderglas and azure Culverkayes.

All these, and many more of his creation
 That made the heavens, the Angler oft doth see,
 And takes therein no little delectation,
 To think how strange and wonderful they be,
 Framing thereof an inward contemplation,
 To set his thoughts from other fancies free,
 And whiles he looks on these with joyfull eye
 His mind is rapt above the starry skye.

Of this poetic temper, in an earlier day, was Dame Juliana Berners, concerning whom we know so little. Mr. Watkins, in his preface to the edition in facsimile,¹ places the beautiful and learned Prioress of Sopwell at the end of the fourteenth century. Her treatise on angling was printed by Wynkyn the Worde in 1496. Mr. Watkins very strangely says that 'the aristocratic instincts of the authoress' caused her to print it in a large and expensive volume, 'that it should not come to the hands of each idle person.' But if Dame Juliana were the daughter of Sir James Berners, beheaded in 1388, how could she be seeing her own book through the press in 1496? The words referred to are obviously the printer's. The author must have died before printing was known in England. As Mr. Watkins points out, the lady quotes earlier MS. authorities, now unknown. The lady must have been extremely powerful, for she writes of an eighteen-foot rod as 'lyghte and full nymbyll to fisse wyth.' This makes one suspect that Dame Juliana is not really the author of the work on angling. The author's advice is often good, especially when he, or she, insists on keeping our shadow off the water. But where this old author strikes the keynote of all right thinking about the art is in the charming words, 'Atte the leest the angler hath his holsom walk and mery at his ease, a swete ayre of the swete saveure of the meede floures: that makyth him hungry. He hereth the melodious armony of fowles. . . . And if the angler

¹ Stock, London, &c.

take fysshe: surely thenne there is noo man merier than he is in his spyryte.'

'If he take fysshe!' it was a large hypothesis even in the Ages of Faith!

* *

When I said that no new books of much interest were coming out, Dr. Smiles's 'Life and Letters of Mr. Murray, the Famous Publisher,' had not reached me. That is interesting indeed to men and women of the pen. There is neither space nor time for a thorough notice of it here. But as to the desk in which Scott found the lost MS. of *Waverley*, when he was looking for fly hooks, I still have my doubts. In vol. i. p. 243 a note states that the desk, after Sir Walter's death, was given to Mrs. Daniel Terry, by her to her brother, Mr. James Nasmyth, while by him it was bequeathed, in 1890, to Mr. John Murray, junior. Now that a desk of Scott's has thus reached so appropriate an owner I believe and rejoice to believe. But that it is the *Waverley* desk I doubt. Scott had many escritaires, and much have I written on that which he used when composing *The Pirate*. But, two or three years ago, I had a letter from a lady, the daughter of an old and intimate friend of Scott's, who told me that the *Waverley* desk, with the famous fly hooks, except a few which Mr. Thomas Todd Stoddart got, was in her possession. I have no right to mention her name, but that the fly hooks were still in the drawer seemed good evidence, in addition to this lady's undoubted opportunities of knowing the truth about the matter. The flies, one may add, bore witness to their date, being tied on hair, not on gut.

* *

Mr. Besant, in a kindly criticism of a little book of essays, asks why I am always tilting at Russian novelists. Well, it is not so much the novelists as the exclusive admirers of the novelists that occasionally 'vex my quiet.' The genius of Tolstoi, Tourguenieff, and Dostvievsky there is no denying. One can only object that they deserve the punishment which Dante assigns to those who deliberately seek sadness. The world is trying enough, but it has its brighter moments. These, perhaps, we should rather seek to prolong by a certain cheerfulness in fiction. Shakspeare wrote *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Henry IV.*, as well as *Othello*. He was not always

in Hamlet's vein. But the Russians, as a rule, are for ever in the mood of the Prince of Denmark, and their example is contagious. Then their admirers, in some cases, will hear of nothing but the Russians, and the glorious Frenchmen and Finns, and Lithuanians. *Sursum corda!* We should have merry endings and prosperous heroes, now and again. Their gloom begets within me a certain prejudice against the gifted Muscovites. It is not exactly a literary judgment; it is a pardonable antipathy. One wearies of hearing Count Tolstoi called the Just—*justissimus unus*. One feels a reaction in favour of Gyp, when she is not writing her last novel, and out-doing *Le Disciple* on his own grubby and grimy ground. However, that there may be no ill feeling between this vessel and the realm of the Great White Czar, let us print a translation from Lermontoff, sent by a Scot in Russia. Lermontoff, like all great men, including Skobelev, was a Scot, a Learmont, and mayhap a descendant of Thomas the Rhymer.

* * *

THE COSSACK MOTHER'S LULLABY.

Sleep, my baby, sleep, my darling,

Balushki Baiè.

Calm the moonlight on thy cradle,

Baiushki Baio.

I will chant thee ancient ballads,

Tales of long ago,

While thou sleepest. Close thine eyelids,

Baiushki Baio.

On the rocks the Tèrek rushes,

Turbid, wild, and free;

On its banks the cruel foeman

Whets his knife for thee.

But thy father is a warrior—

Fear not thou the foe.

He will guard thee: sleep, my little one,

Baiushki Baio.

Knowest thou not the time is coming

Thou shalt don the sword—

Sitting proudly in thy stirrups,

Ride, a warlike lord!

Gold-embroidered saddle housings
I myself will sew.
Sleep, my darling, sleep, my own one,
Baiushki Baio.

Thou shalt be a famous hero,
And the Cossack's pride ;
I will come to see thee mounted
Boldly forth to ride.
All night I will spend in weeping
When I see thee go.
Sleep, my baby, sleep, my angel,
Baiushki Baio.

I shall wear myself with waiting,
Watching still for thee,
All day long in prayer that Heaven
Merciful will be.
I will wonder if thou'rt fainting,
Or if thou liest low.
Sleep, while yet no care thou knowest,
Baiushki Baio.

Thou shalt take a holy image
Ere thou leavest me.
When thou prayest to God, my darling,
Set it before thee :
And before the deadly battle
Let thy memory go
Once to me, to me, thy mother,
Baiushki Baio.

* * *

In a delightful article on 'The Charm of Homer' the *Spectator* lately spoke of the courage of his heroes, their gallant bearing in face of death. They are brave, but not always. Homer looks on courage as a very fluctuating quantity. It is not only that Hector runs away, or that Menelaus faints at the sight of his own blood. They almost all show variable daring. Agamemnon is constantly proposing to 'scuttle' and being rebuked by Odysseus.

'Some other inglorious army shouldst thou command, not us !'

When Hector challenges the Achæans they all dislike the encounter, and Menelaus accepts the challenge only from a sense of honour. Then they draw lots. Among Englishmen, or Frenchmen, or Germans, there would have been plenty of volunteers. Even Achilles is not over-confident when he meets Æneas. For a flesh wound every hero ceases to fight, whereas the moderns go on while they can stand and see. Paris, in fact, expresses the Homeric opinion when he admits that he has his fighting days, and his days when he would rather not fight. No night attack is ever attempted; no forlorn hope is ever led. The most resolute fighter is Odysseus, and with him Diomedes and Aias. A general could not depend on his men. A Peninsular regiment, an impi of Zulus, a tribe of 'Fuzzies,' would have raised the siege of Troy and burned the ships in an hour. My belief is that the gods ruined the heroes' nerve by eternally interfering.

A. LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following contributions. Sums received after April 9 will be acknowledged in the June number. All communications should be addressed to

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E. H. 10s. X. (Bath) 5s. Donum Donnæ 3l. M. 1s. W. C. H. 2s. 6d. J. F. Bradbury 2l. M. R.: 'Donna' 2l.; Night Refuge 2l.; Workroom 2l. Per T. N. L. 3s. L. C. H. 5l. C. and A. O. two comforters. P. A. A. (Reigate) knitted comforter.

Miss Trench acknowledges with many thanks, for the Night Refuge, 19 mufflers, 6 pair socks, K. S. 1l.; also a paper reached her open, and containing nothing, with 'a red wool comforter' written inside.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

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DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE

ONLY GENUINE.

ORIGINAL AND



IS
THE GREAT
SPECIFIC
FOR
CHOLERA.

COUGHES,
COLDS,
ASTHMA,
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DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE. — Dr. J. C. BROWNE (late Army Medical Staff) DISCOVERED a REMEDY to denote which he coined the word CHLORODYNE. Dr. Browne is the SOLE INVENTOR, and, as the composition of Chlorodyne cannot possibly be discovered by Analysis (organic substances defying elimination), and since the formula has never been published, it is evident that any statement to the effect that a compound is identical with Dr. Browne's Chlorodyne must be false. This Caution is necessary, as many persons deceive purchasers by false representations.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE. — Vice Chancellor Sir W. PAGE WOOD stated publicly in Court that Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE was UNDOUBTEDLY the INVENTOR of CHLORODYNE, that the whole story of the defendant Freeman was deliberately untrue, and he regretted to say it had been sworn to. — See *The Times*, July 13th, 1884.

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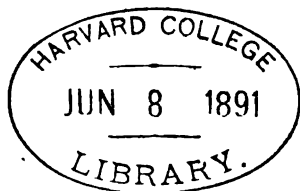
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JUNE 1891.

The Mischief of Monica.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN UNKIND MOMENT.

Forever, Fortune, wilt thou prove
An unrelenting foe to love ;
And, when we meet a mutual heart
Come in between and bid us part ?—THOMSON.

‘SO I thought I would just give you the hint, Monica.’ With these words Mr. Joseph Schofield concluded the interview recorded in the last chapter.

Who had given *him* the hint ?

That he had had a tolerably broad one was plain to the densest vision ; that he had hurried home hot-foot in case young Dorrien should be there before him was the explanation which made all the day's proceeding clear.

But why had he considered such haste necessary ? He had known, for no one had ever concealed it from him, that there had been comings and goings—almost daily comings and goings—between his house and Dorrien's house ; that his nieces had lunched and called at Cullingdon, and that Lady Dorrien's high-swung and old-fashioned barouche—a relic of better times—had been seen now and again at his own door. Perhaps he had not been told quite all the number of occasions on which a solitary rider had found his way alone thither, on some trifling pretext

scarce worthy the name of an excuse, but he had known enough to have made further knowledge a matter of course.

Up to the present hour he had, however, given no sign, and it was this silence which led Monica to conclude he intended to give none. Passive consent, not active assistance, would be the utmost either sister might reasonably expect in the event of suitors arising.

For once her shrewd foresight had been at fault. Bred in an atmosphere of calculating selfishness, she had drunk in suspicion and distrust with every breath. 'You see, my dear Bell,' Prudence was wont to observe, 'it is easy to be pleasant. Almost everybody can be pleasant who tries. Of course people are often shamefully rude; and as for some of aunt Fanny's friends, they were perfectly atrocious to each other; but girls of our age are sweeter tempered. Only don't expect anything more of them. I do not know a single human being who would give up a fancy, or sacrifice a pleasure, to save either you or me from perishing;' which was, perhaps, rather a strong mode of expression, and a sweeping condemnation; but it expressed the habitual view with which her own observation, joined to Colonel Lavenham's teaching, had taught this young girl to regard the world she lived in.

Plunged from that world into another, she naturally measured the inhabitants of the latter by the standard of the former. Her new guardian had been generosity and beneficence itself; he had outstripped in kind consideration every other relation with whom the sisters had ever had to do; he had not only provided for their wants, he had created wants on their behalf; nothing they had desired of him but was supplied instantly, willingly, and, as it seemed, with pleasure at being so entreated. Their trifling attentions, their most ordinary deference to his wishes (Colonel Lavenham had been solicitous to impress on both that such deference was imperative), all of this seemed to good Joseph gratuitous on their part. It inspired him with new affection; and accordingly 'He is really fond of us,' quoth Monica, in some of her sisterly conferences. 'He is. I am sure I don't know why: it must be his own goodness which makes him look on us in the light he does.'

'Oh, I don't know,' rejoined Isabel, one day. It seemed to her that they had not quite come to that. 'Some people may like us—a little,' she added, not seeing the force of such extreme humility.

'Of course they *may*, but they never *do*,' replied Monica, who

was in one of her moods. 'We are not the kind that are liked. We are admired, adored, envied, hated—we might be loved——' she paused.

'Might be loved! I should think we might!' resentful indignation in the other's voice.

'But yet we never have been so,' continued Monica, steadily. 'And I can tell you why: it is because we, on our part, have never learned to love. I think I could love——'

—'Uncle Schofield?'

'Uncle Schofield. It is not only for what he is to us, and what he does for us. I could love him—I do already love him for what he is *in himself*. Bell, I think I shall begin to look out for people who in themselves are good and true. I believe there are some such people to be found. Uncle Schofield is one; he is my first; that makes a beginning; now let us see who will be the next.'

But, all the same, it would not do to let her imagination carry her too far; and when Mr. Dorrien began to usurp a great deal more of her thoughts and day dreams than he had any right to do, Monica simply allowed him a little extra latitude, whether absent or present in the flesh, because of the seeming impossibility of the present leading to anything further in the future. It was rather nice to sit, and look, and listen, and linger, and yield herself to unrecognised love-making which would have to be dashed to pieces if once recognised; the very thread upon which it hung lent to it a charm. Its uncertainty, its unlawfulness, and its apparent hopelessness combined to invest it with a sort of glamour. She had not been at all convinced that she wanted Dorrien, but she had been perfectly aware that she could not have him.

Now she was told in a few distinct words that she could have him.

He, and none other, had been meant by her uncle's imaginary suitor; and even Daisy's renunciation, couched, as it had been, in thought and speech which would not have soiled an angel's wing, had not, in point of fact, opened the door, as Mr. Schofield's more practical assurances had done.

Are our readers curious to know what had stirred up the good uncle? A little bit of malice, the malice of a little bit of a mind. Miss Ethel Carnforth, it may be remembered, had been set on the watch by the heedlessness of an imprudent guest, who ran all risks for the sake of an hour or two in Paradise. In the neglected

Ethel's bosom anger raged. Moreover, she fancied that her own partner, slighted in his turn by her, was beholding with vengeful glee her discomfited and desolate condition from his own obscurity. He could see that she was perforce silent during the whole, or nearly the whole, of the meal; and this was the last drop in her cup of mortification.

Afterwards she had sought out the young man, and thus addressed him: 'We are a good-natured family, are we not, Mr. Smith? Of course you see why Mr. Dorrien and Miss Lavenham have been asked here together. But I was unlucky in being placed next him, and Mr. Wilkins was unlucky in being next her. We had each to endure in silence. One should always do as one would be done by, however; and we shall be able to say that the match was made up at our house.'

'Oh, indeed!' said young Smith, accepting the overture.

Then he went home and tattled. Papa Smith went up in the train next morning with Joseph Schofield. The two put their heads together. Subsequently Mr. Schofield considered that his little touch of dizziness, and the ringing in his ears whereof he complained to his friend the chemist, were almost an intervention on the part of Providence to give him an excuse for getting home before any more had been heard of Dorrien. It had leaked out at breakfast that Dorrien was coming in the afternoon, and he now thought he knew what the young man was coming for.

About the middle of the afternoon Harry came, fresh, it will be remembered, from his confidential interview with Captain Alverstokey.

Archie had been in his way a friend. He had given good advice, and he had offered a handsome loan. It had been a morning of surprises to all the principal persons concerned in our little story, not the least of these being that which Dorrien had received on being voluntarily offered aid which he had never dreamed of asking. Alverstokey was wealthy; but wealthy men are not more eager to lend money than are their poorer neighbours; and perhaps, to tell the truth, at another time no such offer might have been contemplated.

But it chanced that Captain Alverstokey was especially 'flush'; moreover, that he had a soft corner in his heart. He had once been in love—deeply and truly in love—and the affair had not prospered. It had left him a bachelor—a jolly, open-hearted, easy going, and on the whole well-contented bachelor; but it had left him also one faint, faded gleam of heaven opened. He had

seen a reflex of that gleam on Dorrien's brow on the previous evening; it had roused an old, old feeling within; it had stirred a storehouse of dim sensations; and in the night he had dreamed a dream.

The confidence of the following morning, and the self-betrayal into which Dorrien had been beguiled, further worked upon his tender mood. He felt an ineffable pity for this poor fellow whom a few thousands would save.

It seemed a shame.

It had ended in this. If Dorrien could square up other matters, could win his love and her uncle's money, Alverstoke would advance enough to set him free of debt, and could be repaid at leisure.

Dorrien had felt as if prison bars were falling apart before his eyes. I fear he did not think much about Daisy Schofield; he shared Monica's opinion on that subject; add to which, the hope, the tangible, reasonable hope of actually possessing his soul's mistress rendered him indifferent towards every other consideration. About Monica herself he could not feel any real anxiety. She had, it must be owned, given him but little cause for it: and he was hardly to blame if he felt that it was only coming to an understanding with his father, and all was his own. He had been so jubilant, so grateful, so incoherent and wild, so perfectly and radiantly happy, that the friendly Alverstoke had been half sad in the midst of his generosity, half envious of the joy he had himself occasioned.

Then Sir Arthur had been sought out and informed with some confusion, but with clearness upon the only points he really cared about, of the change between his prospective daughters-in-law. He had looked a little crestfallen at first, but as of late he had been taken up rather shortly upon the subject, and had been sharply informed that matters were not so ripe as he thought, with more of the kind, he was so overjoyed to find that the time for action had arrived, even though it were to be action in a different direction from that which had been anticipated, that he was ready again with his 'God bless you, my boy, go in and win,' and with his cogitations as to how much of the Schofield money could be made to flow out over the Dorrien land, the moment his son's views were fully placed before him.

All thus arranged, Dorrien with a light heart galloped westward, and the red sun shone into his eyes as he turned in at the gates of Flodden Hall.

He looked eagerly about, but Monica was nowhere to be seen,

She had been out since daybreak, and had passed through strange vicissitudes of feeling during the intermediate hours. In consequence, she was by this time tired both bodily and mentally, and had gone within doors and settled herself in the drawing-room, where a blaze sparkling at one extremity and September sunlight illuminating the other, combined to make all as cheerful and attractive as heart could desire. Isabel was also there.

'Shall I stay?' the latter had inquired, and been told she was certainly to stay. 'Unless—unless—' Monica had faltered and blushed a little. 'I hardly think—I don't expect—I don't wish to be alone,—that is to say, I would not for the world prepare to be alone,—I——'

'Oh, I understand.' A smile on the speaker's lips.

'But pray, *pray* be careful,' Monica had whispered in an agony, as a glimpse of an approaching horseman warned her that another great moment of her life was approaching. 'Don't go, Bell; dear Bell, *don't* go. I don't think you must go at all. No, Bell, don't go at all. Recollect,' in a tremulous whisper as the door-bell pealed, 'not *at all*,—unless——'

'Unless,' whispered Bell back, with a kiss. 'Oh, I know what that "Unless" means.'

She was charmed to see the alteration in Monica. Enough had been told her—though in vague terms, and with many warnings—to make her understand something of what was going on; and now, if her sister could only become Lady Dorrien in prospect, and spend most of her time at Cullingdon, and have a town house, and—and—Monica had implored her to be silent.

Monica's feeling was, that even with all that had been done to smooth her path, it was still, and ought still to be, beset with thorns. She could not bear to see Bell triumphant and joyous; her uncle's decorous satisfaction was a prick to her conscience; and she scarcely knew whether she ought not even at this hour to deny and defy Dorrien. She was shaking with agitation as he entered the room.

Happily for him, Dorrien never was one to offend at such a moment. He had intuitive perceptions which were never at fault; add to which he had at the present juncture his own soul-absorbing passion to render him serious in the presence of her who induced it. It was never with Monica that he laughed and sang. At an earlier period of their intercourse he might have done so, but then his spirits had been weighted by another consciousness; and though subsequently this oppression had been

thrust aside, it had only given place to new and not less overmastering emotions.

It was, therefore, with scarcely any disturbance that the little party re-seated themselves on the entrance of the new-comer, and tea was handed to the rest by Isabel.

Monica sat in a broad, low armchair by the fire, the rosy flush of the autumnal sun just tipping her head as she leaned it against the cushion, and falling in a streak over the pretty dress whose warm tints her uncle had admired. She owned to being fatigued; she had had a morning ride and an afternoon walk; and then Mr. Schofield's early return was descanted upon, and the cause, the ostensible cause explained.

'He has gone down to the station now,' said Monica. 'He said he should go down to meet some friend who comes out by this five-o'clock train, who will bring his letters, and also take in word that he is not going to his office to-morrow morning. You see how clever we have become, Mr. Dorrien. We know all about our uncle's doings now, and are quite habituated to his going in every day after breakfast, and coming out before dinner. It would really seem strange to have no fresh arrival at dinner-time; no one to expect at six o'clock, bringing out odds and ends and parcels. Uncle Schofield brings out all sorts of parcels. Whatever Bell and I want from Liverpool we ask him to bring. He never minds. He goes and shops for us, and shops a great deal better than we ourselves should do. And he brings us such presents! If he can think of nothing else, he brings chocolate and French bonbons. Look at that box by you. But the other day he produced a parcel, and what should it contain but strips of the most magnificent embroidery! It was lovely, and in such good taste too. We shall feel quite at a loss during this week, when six o'clock comes and brings with it no *fresh* uncle Schofield, only the uncle Schofield we have had all day,' and she laughed a little; then suddenly, and, it seemed to Dorrien, with infinite grace and sweetness added, 'but even the uncle Schofield we have all day is an uncle Schofield to love with one's whole heart.'

'I wish I could be sure he would be an uncle for *me* to love with *my* whole heart,' thought he, to himself; but Alverstoke's unlooked-for generosity made all things seem possible, and he felt that at any rate he should not approach Mr. Schofield hampered with debt as well as with poverty.

Accordingly he listened thoughtfully, and looked appreciatively.

Monica bade him pile up the logs upon the fire. The sisters had praised Mrs. Carnforth's blazing timber, and their uncle had had some brought to his door within a few hours. The station master had sent it up. Though not roughly sawn and severed, it was hissing, steaming, fragrant smelling, and had a compactness and neatness which made amends for size. Dorrien, who from being accustomed to such things never noticed them, merely observed that the firelight danced on Monica's gown as soon as the sunlight had departed, quenched in a sudden cloud.

He knelt in front of the blaze, thoughtfully; the billets in a flame went gaily dancing up the chimney; he watched them burn, and saw not they were there. Monica made some simple remark, he turned in silence and looked at her, and Isabel caught the look. '*Unless*,' she said to herself, with a smile, '*Unless*'—oh, my good sister, the time has come for that '*Unless*.'

'I will see where my uncle is;' a light figure rose, and tripped out. 'Perhaps he will join us—presently.' The '*presently*' was not uttered until the door had closed behind the speaker.

Left alone with his love Dorrien's heart bounded, and he had to steady himself for a few moments ere he knew that she was speaking. She was making some gentle, commonplace observation designed to carry off the significance of the moment, and as she spoke she held out towards the fire her taper fingers, spreading them as though to feel the glow.

By a movement only half voluntary, Dorrien leaned forward and drew the hand towards him. She attempted to reclaim, he held it fast. A broken murmur. A protest. An entreaty. She knew that he was speaking; he knew that she was listening; neither was precisely conscious of what was being said or done; when from without, what was that? A sharp shrill scream ran through the house.

Dorrien dropped the hand he held. Another piercing cry—a frightful, agonised cry. At the same moment Isabel Lavenham threw herself, as it were, back into the room she had just quitted, and in shrill, terror-stricken accents, and with eyes dilated and arms extended, screamed aloud: 'Oh, Monica, he is dead! Oh, Monica, Monica, they say that he is dead!'

CHAPTER XXIII.

‘WHAT IS IT? WHAT HAS HAPPENED?’

Ah, what is life? with ills encompassed round,
Amidst our hopes, fate strikes the sudden wound.—GAY.

MONICA’S first thought was that Bell had lost her pug. She had lately declared a passion for pugs, and Mr. Schofield, prompt to gratify every whim, had straightway procured a true-bred Willoughby, which was the admiration of the neighbourhood. That something had happened to this pet seemed the natural solution of Isabel’s distress, and at another time such distress would have had its due share of importance and sympathy.

But Monica was listening to another voice at the moment.

Dorrien was kneeling by her side; he had not, it is true, actually spoken words of love, but he had so perceptibly shown himself on the brink of doing so, had so risen to the occasion and the opportunity, that she could not doubt what these, left to bring forth their own fruits, would have yielded; and it did seem alike thoughtless and cruel of a sister who had but quitted the apartment a few minutes before—quitted it, moreover, because she was aware that her own presence had become intolerable—thus to break in upon precincts which should have been sacred.

What could justify such a return?

The door had burst open; and there the intruder stood, blind to all within the curtained and shaded saloon, dim now and vaguely outlined throughout; there she stood, heedless of the attitude of the one and the silent displeasure of both, with outstretched arms, wailing anew her cry of horror and amazement.

‘Good gracious, my dear sister!’ said Monica, pettishly. ‘What is all this lamentation about? You are really rather—rather extreme, are you not? Pray bear it like a Christian, Bell, if Punch, like Mrs. Proudie, “ain’t no more.” Uncle Schofield will get you another Punch.’

‘Uncle Schofield? Oh, Monica, Monica!’ With a swift rush into the room Isabel cast herself at her sister’s feet. ‘Oh, Monica, it can’t be true—can it be true? They say—don’t you hear what they say? I met them—oh!’ with another half-smothered shriek. ‘When I went out from here—three minutes ago—I had only just left this room—I saw some people at the gate—I

wondered what they could be doing there. And they came up to the door. And oh, Monica, Monica!' wringing her hands, 'do you think they can know? Oh, what do they mean? What can they mean?' and the affrighted creature hid her face afresh, clinging for support to the stronger nature on which she had ever been wont to lean.

'Perhaps I had better go out and inquire what has happened,' suggested Dorrien, who began to perceive that there was more in this than had at first appeared. 'Shall I go for you?' he added, with a certain pleasurable sensation in thus wording his offer; and at her motion of consent he went.

Outside the door he found quite an assemblage of people, but scarce a sound emanated from the entire group.

'What is it?' inquired he. Insensibly he spoke in an undertone. His eye flew from one to another. Every countenance wore an awe-stricken, paralysed expression.

'Sir, Mr. Dorrien, sir;' it was the respectable elderly manservant, who had been in the establishment for some years, who at length touched Dorrien's elbow. 'This way, sir,' and Rushton turned into the little room in which the week before Monica had been led to re-write her all-important note. Dorrien started back, for now the room had another occupant.

'Who—what—who is it?' he whispered, hoarsely. His throat felt dry and hard.

'It is—my master, sir.'

'Good God!' exclaimed Dorrien, his hands falling by his side. 'How? When? When did it happen? And—and how? Did he?—did he?' breaking off short and looking round for the information his tongue refused to crave.

'Down at the station, sir,' another person, the station master, now stepped forward. 'He,' with a movement of his hand towards the still and motionless form which had been hastily covered and laid on the centre table, 'he came down about an hour ago, or less, to meet the 4.15 down-train, the down-train from Liverpool that gets here at 4.50. He used to come by this train himself, sir; but to-day he had been out early, and only wanted to meet another gentleman who was to bring him his letters; and being rather soon upon the platform he stood talking with me, sir—not half an hour ago, sir,—' and the poor fellow swept his hand across his eyes, 'and that was on the ticket-office side of the station, this side like. The train he was expecting comes in at the other platform over the way. There are two

trains in almost at the same moment, though only one runs through. I have always said it was a bad arrangement; I have indeed, sir. The up-express runs in so sharp round the turning, that any one not knowing of it, would never think it was so near. Well, sir, I ran in to give some tickets out, and Mr. Schofield he went across and met the down-train. They tell me that he set out to cross again, at the back of the carriages, as they were just going out; he was seen to go in under the bridge, where the guard's van was; and it's thought as how he was caught and knocked down by the up-train running through our station on the other line of rail—it's an express and does not stop—in the next moment. None of us heard or saw anything. We were all busy with the departing train, till the line was clear again; and then some of them cried: "There's a man lying on the rails under the bridge!" He was quite dead, sir—he must have been killed instantaneous like. It's a terrible thing, sir; and again the speaker wiped his brow and eye.

'It is the most terrible thing I ever heard of,' exclaimed Dorrien, impetuously. 'Good heavens! How am I to tell those poor girls?' his thoughts naturally recurring to them. 'Within a few yards of his own doorstep, simply crossing as he was accustomed to cross every day of his life! How—how in the world—you say this was his daily train—how did he not know of the danger of meeting the other?'

'He never tried to do such a thing in his life, sir. Always walked up the steps by the side of the bridge, and out at the little top gate, and then over the bridge by the high road. But Mr. Rushton here tells me,' indicating the silent and sorrowful Rushton, 'that all day, he'—in reverence for the silent clay, one and all spoke of the dead as 'he'—'he had complained of feeling unwell and dizzy like. He might have thought he did not care to climb the steps up to the side path, and would take the easier way for once. He may have felt dizzy when he was struck. Who knows?' and again all stood dumb; none caring to break such a silence.

The drawing-room door opened.

Dorrien turned hastily, and crossing the hall, met the terrified, trembling girls ere they could proceed further. They must not be allowed to learn the truth from anyone but himself.

Forgive him if, amidst all the agitation of the scene, he almost loved his task. Shocked and grieved as he was in all sincerity, it was a dear, delightful privilege to have a share in such a moment;

to be admitted to the room which now was filled with sounds of weeping ; to be appealed to, clung to, permitted to direct, suggest, and decide. His very presence was a support.

To him, after the first stupefaction of the shock had passed, the grief-stricken household turned for directions and permissions. He went and came between the hall and the drawing-room, shielded the sisters from observation and interrogation, held counsel without and within, and did not depart till it was apparent that there remained nothing further for him to do or think of.

The final arrangements made, he went in for the last time to the still darkened room in which the two orphans sat, once more bereaved of all, once more homeless, desolate, and adrift.

Isabel would now have quitted the chamber, but, unperceived, Monica held the skirt of her dress, and she was only too glad to comprehend what was intended. Her timid nature shrank from going out alone into the silent, deserted passages, through which had but just tramped those heavy feet, bearing their burden to an upper room. She would have shivered and trembled in some hidden corner close by, until her sister required her,—but it was a relief not to need to seek such a refuge.

‘I am going now, Miss Lavenham,’ said Dorrien, in a quiet voice befitting the occasion. ‘Rushton understands everything. You will not need to see anyone to-night. Good-bye,’ and in the single word ‘Good-bye’ was all the sympathy which another might have struggled to express, but which was so incomparably better left unspoken.

‘Thank you, Mr. Dorrien,’ with equal self-restraint came the still softer response.

Then there was a momentary hush—a pause,—finally a mute leave-taking and departure. He would return, he said, on the morrow, and he was not forbidden to say so. Having been present at the first awful scene, it was surely permissible that he should be admitted during the seclusion of the mourning days to follow. As he rode from the door, they watched his retreating figure disappear almost instantly in the darkness, and each echoed ‘To-morrow’ in their hearts. What would to-morrow bring?

To both my hero and heroine it seemed years since the evening before, when just about this hour they met in the drawing-room at Bingley Hall. Each had undergone more than one revulsion of feeling, had passed through more than one phase since then. Dorrien had bared his soul to a friend, and received not only wise counsel but timely aid ; he had also en-

lightened his parents; and he had all but knelt at the shrine of his love.

Monica had had a still more momentous history.

Her morning's experience, sufficient as it might have seemed for any one day, had been almost eclipsed by that of the afternoon, and again the earlier agitations in the hearts of each had sunk into the background behind the awful event which, as it were, set its seal upon all that had gone before.

Neither, however, but supposed that this event would in its own manner and in due season cement the bond whose formation it had for the time prevented. Dorrien drew a long breath as he cantered lightly past the Schofields' gate. 'Poor souls!' he thought, 'they little know what has happened'—(it had been arranged that a messenger should be sent to the Grange later on in the evening, after other more necessary people had been summoned). 'Poor souls! But what an escape I have had!' reflected he, the next moment. 'To think that I might have been tied up there at this very hour! aye, and should have been if I had not had the luck last night to go and lose my head so as to make Archie Alverstoke tackle me! To think what a near thing it was! Tied up to Daisy Schofield, and Monica free, and—I wonder what she will have? If it is anything in reason—and I don't see why it should be out of reason. The poor old fellow was rich, and I suppose there is no doubt he adopted the girls. Alverstoke seemed to think there was no doubt. How very, how extraordinarily opportune! But I am a brute to think of it. I ought to be, and I *am* sorry. I am certainly sorry. I am most awfully shocked. It is a terrible thing to happen. But, of course, I can't help knowing that it clears my way for Monica; and when I think of Monica, by Jove! I must be forgiven if I forget all the rest. I can pay Archie back at once—that is, as soon as things are arranged. Let me see; how soon can I speak out? Oh, I don't mind waiting a day or two; it would not be decent to say anything till after the funeral; and I may go there every day, of course. Isabel won't mind: she's my friend, and she understands. I'm awfully fond of Isabel. I wonder if she would not do for Alverstoke;' and thus pondering and musing he made his way back through the darkened land to Cullingdon.

'My dear boy, my dear fellow,' cried Sir Arthur, half an hour later, 'I give you joy, Harry, my boy,—eh—what? Oh, no—no; to be sure I should not have said that—I did not mean that. I take back my words, Harry. I'm ashamed of myself; by Jove!

ashamed of myself. Awful thing to happen—awful, awful. 'Pon my word, never was more shocked in my life. Dear me, yes; "shocked" is not the word,' frowning portentously. 'Your mother must call and offer sympathy, and all the rest of it, Harry. Never neglect *les convenances*, my boy. And now, now especially,' exultation again breaking loose, and betraying itself in eye and tone, 'Lady Dorrien must not be behindhand. Lavenham will sound ever so much better than Schofield; Lavenham blood and Schofield money—that's the mixture, eh, Harry? And you have managed wonderfully, my boy—wonderfully. You have gone about it so softly and quietly. Ha! ha! didn't I always say, *Chi va piano va lontano*, eh? Ha!' And he chuckled under his breath, and, while endeavouring to knit his pale brow into a befitting frown, stealthily rubbed his hands under the table.

Harry went away to dress for dinner. His father's congratulations jarred upon him. He was, he knew, at one with Sir Arthur in his secret soul, but he had just sufficient delicacy of feeling as well as kindness of heart to make him ashamed of the sentiments openly paraded by his parent. He did not like to see Sir Arthur's smile when he avowed himself shocked by the death of Monica's uncle. He recollected Monica's unfeigned sorrow, her tears, her tremblings; he called to his aid all that she had ever told him of the affection wherewith her new-found relation had inspired her; he solemnised his mind by dwelling upon the scene within the little chamber, upon the shrouded form in the midst of the appalled and shuddering group; wondered vaguely—ah, poor fellow! he had never thought much about such things before—whither the spirit of the dead had flown on the instant of its dismissal from its earthly abode; and thus seeking to sober excitement, which, in spite of every effort, continually slid into exhilaration, was at length able to descend and bear his part at the dinner-table without betraying, either by speech or countenance, anything to rouse suspicion on the part of the attendants.

After the evening meal was over he wandered about the house by himself. Somehow he felt as if he had never before done justice to his home. It was a dear old place—yes, indeed, it was a dear old place. There was a magnificent view from the gallery window; a view which only needed a little opening up. The gallery itself was a fine gallery; a little more light thrown in upon it would make it a remarkably fine gallery. The library had fallen into disorder; libraries should not be allowed to fall into disorder. The library at Cullingdon was one of the best rooms of the house. There was a nice little room out of it. The lounge went quickly

forward and passed into the little room. His eye glistened. 'I think she would like this,' he murmured beneath his breath.

He saw Monica everywhere. Her image rose before him in this attitude and that. Here, it was the *pose* of her lovely head against the light; anon the outline of her graceful figure in the shadow. His eye strayed hither and thither to the different places which had been adorned by her presence, to the articles of furniture which had been honoured by her use. Now it was a chair in which she had reclined; again a ledge against which she had leaned; and again a casement from which she had gazed.

Here, she had accepted from him a flower; there, bestowed upon him a smile. At one spot she had tormented him; at another healed him. Every nook had its own association; and every association was divine.

'Never saw a fellow so hard hit in my life; no, by Jove, I never did,' old Sir Arthur whispered and giggled. 'Just look at him, my lady; d'ye see how moonstruck the fellow is? He has been meandering about ever since dinner; going from room to room; taking up and handling things without looking at them; and never hearing a word that's said to him! And, by Jove! she's a fine girl, a deuced deal finer girl than the other; and Harry has had the *nous* to see it. Directly she came here, I said to myself it was an infernal pity that she hadn't the other's money down, and Harry might have gone over to her at once. As it is, he has managed a vast deal better. Your son knows a thing or two, my lady; he's no fool, Lady Dorrien. You will have to do whatever Harry tells you in this matter, and no words about it. You will have to forget your megrims, and trot over with him to-morrow, and leave cards, and inquiries, and all the rest of it. Harry will tell you what to do. Yes, by Jove! Lavenham blood and Schofield money; it is a glorious combination. And I don't fancy Harry will need to be told to do up the old place. That's her doing—this Lavenham girl's doing. Oh, I heard her; I heard her praising this and that; and I never was better pleased, even when I had not a notion what a turn affairs were taking. *Now*, of course it will be everything if she sticks to what she said then. Harry was talking about putting the library in order: I suppose that means she told him it was out of order. He tells me that we ought to see to the roof on the left wing—but, bless my soul! if we begin with roofs—however, there is no knowing where we shan't begin, if Harry takes us in hand. What will the figure be, I wonder?' musing, with his thin fingers pressed together at the tips. 'Sixty, seventy, eighty? Who is to say that it might not

be a hundred? These mercantile men think nothing of a couple of hundred thousand, and there are but the two girls. Confound it! there will be legacies, however,' his face falling; 'people are perfect idiots about legacies; and if Joseph Schofield was a cranky creature—but I don't fancy Joseph was that. No, no; he was a sensible man, a very worthy, decent sort of man; and if putting a bit of crape round my hat would please Harry, I'm sure I should have no objection in life, provided all goes well. I would do anything in the way of compliment. I'll go to the funeral if Harry wishes. Joseph is sure to have done the thing handsomely, eh, my lady? These Liverpool men always do the thing handsomely; it is part of their business; it is what they are for. Now, Joseph has been at it for, let me see,' calculating, 'for forty years or so; began young, we'll say; well, forty years in Liverpool means a long sum of addition in *£. s. d.* Joseph must be worth his couple of hundred thousand, eh? Well, well, hardly as much as that, perhaps; his hundred and fifty; equally divided. But then there are the legacies,' his brow again overclouding; 'who is to say how much may not be dribbled away in those confounded legacies? There ought to be a law against such infernal nonsense. Depend upon it, we shall lose something in legacies; we must make up our minds to that; but, anyway, there ought to be sixty or seventy down, and of course there is always the chance of the sister's share coming in too. I wonder how soon we shall hear; how soon it will have leaked out? If I knew anyone in Liverpool likely to be an authority I would go in to-morrow; but, at any rate, Harry can go in to-morrow; and he can go over to the house; and it can't be a secret long; the other Schofields will let it out;' and thus the well-pleased old tongue babbled on, little dreaming of the news in store.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FEW NIGHTS AGO I WAS SO—HAPPY.

For of fortune's sharp adversitie,
 The worst kind of infortune is this,
 A man that hath been in prosperitie,
 And it remembers, when it passèd is.—CHAUCER.

'AND oh, dear! oh, dear! what is to be done with those poor girls?'

The speaker was Mrs. George Schofield, whose eyes were red with tears, and whose large white pocket handkerchief with its black border, formed an important feature of her lap.

'A few months ago, and I should have said, Oh, it's a terrible thing to happen; but look, he leaves no wife and children; and there's scarcely a man about but has his wife and children,—so that really it would not have been so bad but that it might have been worse, though perhaps I should think shame of myself for saying such a thing. But when we went over, Daisy and I, the very night we heard—such a night as it was too, blowing and raining, for all it had been such a beautiful day!—and found those two poor young creatures sitting crouching over the hearth, so miserable and lonely, I said to Daisy afterwards, "Talk of daughters; they seemed for all the world as if they had been poor cousin Joseph's own daughters!" Well, they have been treated as such; nothing was too good for them, nor yet too grand for them; he was so set upon those girls. Ah dear! the question is, What will they do now? You have heard about the will, of course?'

Her companion was a distant relation who had come to attend the funeral. He had heard about the will. Knowing nothing of the Miss Lavenhams, and very little generally of the Schofield branch of his family, he now presumed the deceased had done the right thing, and left his money in a proper channel.

'A proper channel! I don't know what you mean by a proper channel,' replied Mrs. Schofield, with a vague idea of resentment. 'All I know is, he has left it to none of his own people; and though, as I say, that would have been neither here nor there three months ago,—I am sure none of *us* want it, though I did think George being in the business—but, however, let that be. But when a man takes into his house two poor penniless orphans, and in a manner adopts them, and all, he ought surely to have left them *something*. Why, here's my Daisy, she says she knows her uncle meant to do well by them both, for he was joking her one day about being an heiress—you know Daisy has her grandfather's money, Mr. Henderson, and a pretty penny it is, but that's between you and me,—well, poor cousin Joseph, only a week ago, was making fun with her on the sly; saying that if she didn't look sharp her cousins would cut her out, for "an uncle might do as well as a grandfather at a pinch," with more of that kind of *funning*,—and though it was under pretence of teasing Daisy, who, he knew, never cared to hear this money of hers talked about, she holds to it that she was sure he was in solemn earnest all the time. He had that way with him, cousin Joseph had. When he built that fine house of his, he was for ever laughing beforehand about what he was going to do. As soon as ever he

had made up his mind to a thing he would joke about it, to kind of take off the edge. So then, directly I heard he had been joking Daisy about making more heiresses in the family, said I, "*He'll make them.*" And so he would have made them if he had but lived to do it.'

'That would hardly do to go to law with, Mrs. Schofield.'

'Nay, who said anything about the law, Mr. Henderson? Of course those that get will keep; and all I do declare is that, if my poor cousin had lived to die peaceably in his bed, he would have made a different will.'

A good many other people thought that if Mr. Schofield had lived he would have made a different will, but only one person knew how near he had been to doing so, and Monica kept her lips inscrutably sealed upon the subject.

From the first she felt no real hope. Her uncle's words had burnt themselves into her brain. 'I mean to do for you as if you were my own.' 'I intend to make a settlement.'

In such form had his communications been couched; and directly she was able to think, the remembrance lay like lead upon her heart.

Of one thing she was thankful: she had neither had time nor inclination to confide in her sister the object of the sought-for interview. At its termination she had flown to her own chamber, eager for a brief term of solitude before meeting Dorrien, and Bell's curiosity had been easily satisfied with an assurance that nothing alarming had occurred, and that further confidence should be given presently. She had been more interested in Dorrien's visit, and in trying to discover Monica's attitude towards him, than in anything her uncle Schofield might have seen fit to communicate. Subsequently she had forgotten the 'business talk' altogether.

But Monica? To Monica there was now but one question of paramount importance. Had her lost guardian carried out his intentions, or had he not? If not—farewell all besides. She was only too well aware of the absolute impossibility of her wedding one of the ruined Dorriens, unless she could replenish the fortunes of the house, to entertain the slightest hope on that score.

She had, within a few hours, learned to know how dear such a hope might become to her. But once more penniless, or almost penniless, what chance for her lover? She did Dorrien justice, because she could not help doing him justice. A woman is rarely at fault when she is the object of deep, strong, unchecked passion, and Monica Lavenham was a woman of quick apprehen-

sion and keen intuition. She had indeed been prejudiced to blindness in regard to her cousin, Daisy Schofield, but there had been abundant cause for her being so; and it may be added that, even had no explanation taken place between the girls, a very short time would have sufficed to clear away a youthful and foolish antipathy.

But with Dorrien the case was different. She had felt him hers, even before he had known himself to be so. It was no question of expediency—the expediency was all the other way. He was hers, but how long would he remain so? If only he had spoken—and yet she knew it was better that he had not spoken. It must now be her part to prevent his speaking. Should she by the wildest chance be found in possession of the fortune which her uncle had designed for her, Dorrien should be allowed to plead his cause. A word, a sign, a look would bring him at any moment; but if—she set her lips resolutely and gazed with wide-open eyes into the future—if nothing had been done, all must be over that ever might have been between her and Harry Dorrien.

Kind Mrs. Schofield, well to the front during the days of mourning which intervened between the fatal event and the last sad rites being paid, was both astonished and edified by the strict resolution with which Monica denied the house to all comers. She and Daisy had taken up their abode at Flodden Hall by the sisters' earnest request, to be with them for the time being; and with her new feelings towards the latter, and softened in all respects towards the former, Monica was now so respectful, affectionate, and considerate, that perhaps the worthy matron's indignant outburst above recorded, owed more to the recollection of that secluded period than to any previous opinion on the subject. We are all alike in our susceptibility of kindness; and although, as we have said before, Mrs. Schofield had been treated with decency, and even with good-humoured tolerance, by the Miss Lavenhams, they had never before shown, because they had never before felt, anything more.

Monica was now all attention and deference. The homely, wholesome sorrow which found vent in sighs, and tears, and many a simple reminiscence, suited her at this juncture better than finer feelings might have done; while, as for Daisy, she found Daisy more and more congenial every hour.

The cousins did everything together. Bell being laid up with a species of nervous attack which required rest and soothing atten-

tions,—required Mrs. Schofield, in short, who had the talents of a nurse and the figure for a sick-room,—the two who had erewhile been not only rivals but antagonists, were now thrown into each other's company all day long.

Was it because in Daisy's companionship Monica saw an excuse for not admitting Dorrien, that she so assiduously cultivated it? Partly. On his appearance at Flodden Hall the day after the tragic event, he had been informed that Mrs. Schofield and her daughter had taken up their residence within the mansion, and that orders had been given to exclude all others. The younger Miss Lavenham was seriously unwell from the shock.

In order to soften such a sentence, however, Monica went out to the door and exchanged a few words with the visitor. They understood—or at least he fancied they understood—each other. He was not to come because the Schofields had come. It was fitting that Mrs. Schofield and her daughter should be in the house where lay the remains of one who had not only been their near relation, but neighbour and friend; but, whilst they were there, Dorrien was better away.

'We think we had better not let in any of our friends,' said Monica softly—he told himself 'reluctantly,'—but the reluctance, if there were any, went hand in hand with resolution.

He had to ride away, and one pair of eyes from behind the blinds saw him go. Mrs. Schofield was almost vexed that no one could think of an excuse for his admission. Considering that he had been there the day before, had actually been present at the first sad scene, it seemed to her that an exception might very well be made in his favour, and as she spoke, she looked at Daisy. Daisy had on a black dress—she had had one lying by—and it now really seemed as if Daisy, if no one else, might be allowed to see Mr. Dorrien.

'I have tried to undeceive her for some time,' Daisy's little rueful face came close to Monica, 'but she clings to the idea. It will pass away. Do not mind, Monica.'

'I shall have no right to "mind" soon,' murmured poor Monica, with a set lip. But outwardly she only kissed her cousin's cheek, remarking for the first time what a soft young cheek it was. 'But for me,' she said to herself, 'he might have been happy with her; by my doing, we each lose all.'

The funeral over, it could no longer be concealed that all, so far as Mr. Schofield's adopted daughters were concerned, had been lost.

Previous to their appearance on the scene he had, under the belief that he possessed no relations who required assistance, bequeathed his wealth in the very manner most dreaded by Sir Arthur Dorrien. Sir Arthur had not indeed anticipated the full extent of the damage, having but imagined, at the worst, a curtailment of the young ladies' fortunes by ten thousand pounds or so. Imagine then his feelings on hearing that the whole had gone, and gone to public charities and benevolent institutions!

No second will had been made, none had even been spoken about to the legal adviser who now produced the document; and it could therefore be but a matter of pure conjecture whether or not any other might ultimately have taken its place.

Under such circumstances nothing could be said. The Miss Lavenhams had barely been three months resident beneath their uncle's roof; so that, although it was easy to surmise that they might eventually have become his heirs, no one could positively assert that they would have done so. Certainly no claim could be put forward on their behalf.

'Good God! Alverstoke, she hasn't a penny!' Dorrien's voice was hoarse, and his eyes were strained and bloodshot. He had taken horse and galloped the entire distance between his own door and that of his friend, and now burst in, without waiting either for permission or announcement.

Luckily Alverstoke was alone.

'Hasn't a penny!' echoed the latter, rising to his feet and suddenly sitting down again. 'I—stop a moment. I don't understand. You mean Miss Lavenham, of course?'

'Of course; who else should I mean?' loudly. 'I tell you it has all come out,—we knew we should hear to-day,—and, by Heaven! we *have* heard. So there is an end of *me*!' and he dashed his hat and whip on to the table and flung himself down, staring at his companion with wild, passionate orbs.

'When did you hear?' said Alverstoke.

'Just now. Not an hour ago. I was at the funeral; and just as I was wondering who I should hang on to, to hear about matters, I met Carnforth. I guessed that Carnforth would know, and he did. He told me everything.'

'What, *he* told you? It may not be so bad then, if you only had it from Carnforth,' observed Alverstoke, drily. 'I should not go by what any one of the Carnforths say.'

'No more I did; but—but I am ashamed to say it—I went to old Mr. Rowland next, and his word is another man's oath, and—

and it's true, by God, it's true!' throwing himself into a fresh attitude.

'Don't give up hope, Harry.'

'I have not given up hope—hope has given up *me*. You don't know how I have held on. I have been half afraid—uneasy—I don't know what. I did not like her refusing to see me, and the Schofields' being there. I feared they might have been saying things;'

—'Well, they might, you know.'

'Of course they might, but Monica knew all there was to know about that long ago. I told her a lie about it too, but she had got over the lie. She—oh! she had grown to forgive me everything,' and his head dropped upon his hands.

'It is rough upon you, Harry.' Alverstoke rose up and put his hand for a moment on Dorrien's shoulder. 'I suppose——' he began thoughtfully, and paused.

'Nothing can be done now—nothing,' said Dorrien, in a broken voice. 'You did all for me that a fellow could do, but there is no way out of this. We are a ruined race. The sins of our forefathers have found us out. If I had had but a pittance,—but how could I ask a girl like that to share a pittance?'

People do, you know.'

'It is no matter,' said Dorrien, with impatience; 'I have not got it. I have nothing, absolutely nothing but what my father allows me; and *you* know, Alverstoke, what I should have to expect from that quarter. I ought not to blame him either. Until lately—until I met with—with her, I felt as he did. Marriage without money was a thing impossible in our family. We are draining our very life's blood to keep going as it is. Oh! a few nights ago I was—so—happy.'

Alverstoke threw a log upon the fire, and trampled it down with his foot. He would not look anywhere but into the blaze he made.

For a brief period the clock ticked on in the room, and its monotonous note was the only sound that broke the silence.

'Have you seen her at all, since?' inquired Alverstoke, at last.

'Only once. The next day. She came to the door to tell me I was not to go in. That was all.'

'Do you suppose she knew, then?'

'I do not suppose she was thinking about it. The Schofields were there, and of course I—they—it would not have done to admit me. As soon as I knew they were to be in the house for a time, I understood, of course, that I must wait.'

'You have not met again?'

'Met the Schofields?'

'No, Miss Lavenham. You did not see her to-day?'

'I saw her. She was there. I did not get near her. The family party kept together; and after we left the churchyard their carriage had gone. Those of us who were merely there as outsiders walked off down to the train. It was then I walked with Carnforth. Afterwards I got into the railway carriage with old Mr. Rowland.'

'And is it absolutely certain?'

'Absolutely. Rowland had been hearing all about it just before the funeral, from the solicitor himself. The house will be sold; young Schofield succeeds to the business; as for the rest—he had no "rest" to think about when he made the will.'

'The poor girls must turn out, then?'

'Must turn out? Yes. Go where they came from, or where they can get—or, in short, anywhere. A nice look-out, isn't it? Not twenty years old yet, and twice turned out of house and home! Good Heavens! When I think of it!' and he tossed hither and thither, finding torture in every fresh movement.

'It is bad luck,' said Alverstoke in his soft, dreamy drawl. 'I never heard of worse luck. If there were anything one could do——'

—'There is nothing one can do. In my first idiocy I rushed straight to Sir Arthur. I thought, if it was possible—if I could make him believe my honour was pledged—but I was a fool. I might have known it would be no use. He cannot give what he has not got; and if I had been engaged ten times over it must have been the same—all must have come to an end now; so——' and he drew a long burning breath and bit the lip which betrayed him by its movement.

'I suppose—you—you could not work?' said Alverstoke, hesitating.

'Work? I am nearly thirty years of age, and I have never worked in my life. Who would care for my "work" now? I know nothing—I can do nothing. My father would as soon have thought of setting me to labour in the fields, as of having me taught anything by which I could earn a penny. We have been fools all through—now we shall be beggars.'

'I suppose your father is very much cut up?'

'Raves,' said Dorrien, curtly.

'And your mother?'

'I don't know anything about her.'

'You had better come and stop with me—you must get away.'

Dorrien rose from his chair.

'Don't think me ungrateful,' he said, huskily; 'and don't call me a driveller; but I am going to hang on still to—to——'

—'To what?'

'To a hope—to a chance. It may not be as bad as they say. I tell myself it is. I know it is—but I cannot yet *feel* that it is. Anyhow I'll wait. I won't do anything till—till *she* goes. And then——.' He broke off with his back to his companion.

'Well? And then?'

Dorrien affected not to hear.

'And then?' said Alverstoke, standing in front of him.

Dorrien turned his head, and looked for his accoutrements.

'What shall you do then, Dorrien?'

'Go to the devil,' said Dorrien, shortly.

(To be continued.)

On Autographs.

II.

IT was asserted in a former paper that the value attaching to the notes which chronicle the trivialities belonging to the lives of eminent men lies in the fact that we take the writers, as it were, unawares and in undress, catching them, like those who are made the victims of a detective camera, when, altogether unconscious that they are sitting for their portrait, they have relaxed those efforts to appear at their best, which the least vain of mankind are accustomed, under like circumstances, to make. 'I write not so much to give information,' explained in such a note not long ago a modern master of style, 'as to . . . illustrate in passing that I can get lost in grammar like a common man.' And it is in such aberrations, in other matters besides grammar, that we hope to trace the natural tendencies of the writer when he has forgotten to pose for the public. But there are those with regard to whom such a hope would be vain. In the case, for example, of the author of 'Political Justice'—a note from whose hand, though not properly belonging to the collection of letters with which we are immediately concerned, we proceed to quote—we feel that it would be altogether impossible to take him by surprise, that each word, written or uttered, each trifling action he performed, was a carefully calculated and well-considered touch added to the portrait of himself, which he offered for the admiration of mankind and intended to bequeath to posterity. If we ourselves, now that the glamour which dazzled the eyes of his contemporaries is faded, consider that certain touches would have been better omitted, that is a matter of taste, and does not affect the intention with which they were applied; nor would it, we may be sure, have been Godwin's own opinion. His mistakes, if mistakes they were, were intentional and deliberate, never accidental.

Take, for instance, the note we give. It is only a complaint

of having been twice turned away from the door of a friend upon whom he had intended to confer the honour of a visit ; yet, in its tone of dignified reproach, of lofty self-respect mingled with proud humility, and of conscious rectitude, it is a work of art complete in itself, and one of which we observe that Godwin himself was careful to preserve a copy. It is the note of a man who feels the eyes of the world upon him, and cannot afford, even for a moment, to lose sight of his audience :

‘ Dear Madam,’ he writes, addressing Mrs. Inchbald, ‘ I have all my life been unwilling to put an ill-construction on an ambiguous action ; and therefore, though I was sent away in somewhat of a rude manner from your door some months ago, I would not believe that anything unkind or unfriendly was intended. The repetition of the same thing last Monday seems to leave no room for doubt.

‘ One reason of my confidence was the clearness of my conscience and my perfect assurance that, since I last had the pleasure of seeing you, at Earl’s Terrace and Lennard House, I had done nothing that could give you the slightest occasion for displeasure. Is it too much to ask what is my offence ? My creed does not direct me to confess to a priest, but I am not the less anxious to stand discharged to my own conscience.

‘ I have had the happiness to know you five-and-twenty years, and in all that time I can fully acquit you of any capricious action towards me. Is it worth while to change the tenour of your conduct towards me so late in the day ? You, I have no doubt, can say with King Henry in the song “ God-a-mercy, I have a hundred as good as ever was he,” and therefore can part with me without compunction, but I must take up the exclamation of King James, “ Alas, woe is me, such another, England within, shall never be ! ” Give me leave to inscribe myself, with much regard and attachment, very faithfully yours.’

It is the privilege of the artist to make capital out of his misfortunes. Godwin, we feel sure, as he laid the copy complacently away, derived, from the form into which he had thrown his reproaches, some consolation for the slight which had called them forth. Whether or not the desired effect was produced upon the culprit we have no means of ascertaining. Possibly, viewing the incident in the light of the letter from Mrs. Inchbald which follows, we are justified in concluding that those five-and-twenty years to which her correspondent makes his appeal may have been themselves the criminals, and her refusal to admit him

the beginning of that system of isolation to which it points. It is the answer to an invitation to dinner, and runs thus :

‘My dear Sir,—To anyone who had not read “the Prime of my Life” I should be ashamed to say that which I am going to say to you.

‘I no longer take pleasure in society, except in that homely society I see every day, and which (for in that consists my partiality) see *me every day*, and do not (I hope) see me grow old. I wish to be admired by *you*, and would not meet you in the street for twenty guineas, much less dine with you, I am of late so altered.

‘You have tempted me beyond measure with your company, and if you would all consent to be blindfolded I might perhaps be prevailed on to come; but then I should be in agony for fear either your or Mr. Edeworth’s bandage should drop off.

‘My compliments to Mrs. Godwin. I am highly obliged by the assurances with which her invitation is adorned, but even my obligation will not induce me to become the foil of her youth in such excellent company. Adieu. When I am a little more accustomed to my old age I trust I shall feel the pang far less; till when I decline all visits but to those to whom I dare not trust the feelings I have revealed to you, because they detest all follies but their *own*.
‘E. INCHEALD.’

There it stands, carefully preserved by her confidant, an exhibition of human nature perhaps, but surely of human nature exaggerated to the point of caricature; a record of that vanity which carries its own chastisement, and which yet is not without a certain sordid pathos of its own. We are sorry for the woman who dared not face her friend’s eyes lest she should read in them the reflection of her own decay. There is a singular mixture in it, too, of cowardice and of courage—of cowardice in yielding to the weakness and courage in avowing it. She would rather Godwin, philosopher though he were, should know her for a fool than for a woman past her prime. And who shall say that she was not the best judge? ‘Pan is dead, but Venus is grown old.’ We remember that the errant monk who, according to the legend, suffered the disenchantment of that revelation, returned with haste to his cloister, never to be troubled more by beguiling visions.

If the letter does in truth furnish the explanation of the writer’s refusal to receive Godwin’s visits, the refusal itself, instead

of the rebuff it would appear at first sight, is only another proof, where proofs abound, of the extraordinary estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries—an estimation so great that in Mrs. Inchbald's case she elected rather to cut herself off from his society altogether than run the risk of lessening the admiration she prized so highly. As one observes the conspiracy of adulation entered into by those who surrounded him, one is forced to acknowledge that it would have been a miracle indeed—and miracles were not in Godwin's line—had he succeeded in viewing himself in any other light than that in which they had agreed to regard him.

'This is a sad breach of punctilio,' writes Sir Thomas Lawrence, after begging permission to change the day for which he had invited him to dinner, 'but you must forgive it, sir, or you will give me a triumph. I shall say that you are less benevolent than I thought you were, and perhaps boast of finding one part of your character at least in which you are not different from common men.'

Did the painter, one wonders, deliver himself of his graceful menace with a half smile and a shrewd suspicion that in one respect, at all events, though not that to which his words pointed, the invited guest was not exempt from the weaknesses of 'common men'? The language of flattery was, no doubt, part of the elaborate and somewhat stilted courtesy of the age, yet the amount of it which seems to have been administered to Godwin justifies us in assuming that it was more than usually welcome. The supply, in this case as in others, equals the demand, and the character of the homage offered at a shrine may fairly be regarded as furnishing some indication of the nature and tastes of the divinity within. And if this be so, the man whose acquaintance with his second wife was inaugurated by the exclamation on her part, 'Is it possible that I behold the immortal Mr. Godwin himself?' was not likely, as his biographer hints, to be over-fastidious as to the quality of the incense he received.

It is a relief, as we turn over the papers, to find Charles Lamb (in a letter which, being already printed, we do not give here) asserting himself so far as to inform his friend—though, as we feel, with tears in his eyes, and, as he says himself, with 'trembling anxiety'—that he can make no exception, even in Godwin's favour, to the rule he had been compelled to lay down as to the exclusion of visitors in the forenoon. How necessary the regulation had been we infer from another note before us, in which, after saying

that he had been 'strangely hindered' in a work he had in hand, he proceeds to specify the nature of the hindrance. We, as we read, could wish it were stranger! 'I set to it in earnest yesterday morning,' he writes, 'and rap-rap came a knock and one of the Lloyds (whom you know I love!) from Birmingham, and no more business could be done that day.' The little ebullition of impatience gives the touch of nature which—in the matter of morning visitors at least—makes the least of us feel our kinship to Charles Lamb. For the spiritual descendants of the Lloyds of Birmingham still flourish and are mighty in the land, and others besides their then victim are, by their means, 'strangely hindered' in whatever work they have set themselves to do.

On another occasion we find Lamb once more in a genuine fit of ill-humour, this time directed against Godwin himself. It is true his anger was not without justification. To be called upon—and that not once, but apparently again and again—to produce a manuscript which has not only been mislaid, but which, if discovered, would do no credit to the writer, is a test which might well try the most serene artistic temper, and that of Lamb had plainly not been proof against it.

'My dear sir,' he writes in evident irritation, 'I assure you positively that what I had begun to write about Chaucer was so inconsiderable that you could make no possible use of it. I have it not, and if I could recover it I should be extremely hurt to be obliged to show it you. I beg you to let the matter now rest, and unless you wish to tease and vex me, that you will not mention it again. I hoped that I had said enough before.

'Yours truly, C. LAMB.'

And so, not surely in a characteristic mood, we leave Charles Lamb, returning to more recent times and to the order of the alphabet, from which we departed to set Godwin and his friends together in one group.

Here we find a letter from Mr. W. E. Greg, too lengthy to quote in its integrity, which, starting from the question of the expediency or the reverse of the recall of Lord Raglan, proceeds to the discussion of the wider issues the subject suggests. For a teacher who, in one department at least of speculative thought, was content to leave so much in doubt, he strikes us as somewhat intolerant of indecision or vacillation in matters temporal on the part of those whose difficult duty it is to guide the destinies of mankind. Possibly he failed to take into due account the positive inability

to arrive at a decision with which some minds are afflicted. 'You don't know how lazy I am!' replied the candid beggar when reproached with his idleness, and the plea is not without its fragment of a neglected truth. The laziness is a physical condition which it is as necessary to include in the reckoning as any other factor. 'You don't know how undecided I am!' would be the corresponding complaint of many a hard-pressed and equally candid politician. And the more conscientiously the endeavour is made to see all sides of a question the more paralysed is action. Greg, however, has no doubts as to his own opinions.

After animadverting with severity upon the 'permanent evil and difficulty of our administrative system—which is not to regard fitness in our appointments or unfitness in our dismissals—in fact, *never* to dismiss or recall,' and after discussing at some length the reasons for the apparent difficulty experienced by ministers in making fit appointments, he proceeds to give his own views upon government.

I believe,' he writes, in allusion to the House of Commons, 'I believe a bold and resolute minister might easily get the command of it. But, unfortunately, moral courage seems even more wanting among ministers than among senators. None of them seem to know how much safety there lies in daring. I incline to think that a really courageous Premier might soon be independent of, or master of the House of Commons, just as a really honest and courageous member might soon make himself independent of, or master of his constituency. But,' ends Mr. Greg regretfully, 'the faith is wanting.'

It is possible that some of the more timid amongst us may consider that the absence of that political faith which the writer deplores is not so much one of the pressing 'Enigmas of Life' as its presence would be an omen and presage of 'Rocks Ahead!' Mr. Greg's own ideal of government plainly approximates to that indicated by Mr. Kinglake, when—the historian of the war following close upon the heels of its critic—after acknowledging the gift of a photograph of the present Czar, he adds, 'it was a kind thought of yours to aid me in my somewhat wild desire to learn the prospects of Europe by consulting a face as an oracle.'

We pass rapidly over the letters which follow, pausing to notice one from Lord Hardinge, in which the old soldier alludes to a prayer, 'beautiful, simple, and touching,' which his grandchildren are learning by heart; and another in which Sir John Herschel has quitted, for the moment, the contemplation of the stars to

concern himself with sublunary matters, and, like Mr. Greg, is troubled by the shortcomings of statesmen.

Kingsley, too, as he comes before us here, strikes the same note of dissatisfaction, though in his case the cause is different. He wishes he could see more of his correspondent and gain from him 'some of that purity of taste which I find it so difficult to keep up in this "spasmodic" and tawdry age of Pre-raphaelitism . . . In these confused days one takes refuge more and more with those who, in addition to cultivated minds, keep their chivalry and old-fashioned high principle.'

He is not the first, nor will he be the last, who has desired to destroy the tree and retain the fruit. There is something of poetical justice in the lamentation of the foe of mediævalism over the chivalry which was one of its products.

Another, and a very different philosopher, follows. George Cornwall Lewis writes, dealing with the question of punishment temporal and eternal. Slight and cursory as is his treatment of the subject, there is something in the tone of his letter which inclines us, possibly unfairly, to class the mood in which it was written as one of those in which the problems which have been matters of life and death importance to generation after generation of mankind serve only as riddles and acrostics upon which to exercise ingenuity or sharpen wit.

'I can't admit,' he says, 'that *retaliation* has properly anything to do with punishment by men. It may be considered the principle of eternal punishment by God, inasmuch as here the punishment bears no proportion to the offence, and is much severer than is requisite for prevention. However, Warburton and those who agree with him lay great stress upon the preventive effects of posthumous punishment, and argue that without a religion based on the hope of heaven and the fear of hell society could not hold together.'

Quitting the domain of philosophy, we enter on the next page upon the higher (or lower) province of art.

There are few attitudes of mind more characteristic than that of the artist towards his own work. The spirit of insincere or half-sincere depreciation; the genuine and in some cases paralysing humility; the astonishing hopefulness in the face of failure, or the corresponding undue despondency; the self-appreciation, distinct from conceit, and the serene confidence of merit—all these are to be met with at any time in the artistic world. It is not easy for the literary man to steer clear of the dangers which beset him, whether, as so frequently happens in the case of the artist who

writes not for his public but for the love of his art, he suffers to an undue extent, as years go by, from the 'critical fastidiousness which time teaches and never satisfies'—the quotation is from a letter of Lord Houghton's which lies before us—or whether—and this is the peculiar temptation of fortune's favourites—having found his audience over-indulgent, he learns to treat it with contempt, and to consider anything and everything good enough to be thrown to the dog who is waiting for its bone. It would be well, in this latter case, that he should bear in mind that, in forgetting what is due to his public he forgets also what is due to himself, and, to make use of a somewhat finely drawn theological distinction, that if the brute creation can claim no rights with regard to its master, man, yet that it in no wise follows that man is thereby exempted from duties towards it.

In the service of art, as in another service, the labourer may well feel that, when all is done, he is but an unprofitable servant; but there are nevertheless degrees and differences in the amount and quality of the service rendered which a wise man, no less in his own case than in that of others, cannot but recognise; and when we shall have arrived at his genuine estimate of his own work, we shall be some way advanced towards the formation of a true estimate of himself.

The difficulty, and it is no imaginary one, is to get at his opinion of it at all. If he thinks well of his performance he is also apt to think it well to disguise his favourable opinion; if, on the other hand, in his heart he thinks ill of it, he is not unlikely to adopt a tone by which, having failed to impose upon himself, he yet hopes to perform the less difficult feat of imposing upon the world. It has become a truism—one of those truisms which are only partially true—that a man is accepted at his own valuation, and it is no doubt a temptation to which many succumb to try how far the dictum holds good. The generality of mankind are more eager to defend their reputations, literary or other, when they have a lurking suspicion that they do not merit defence, and to cry up their wares when a misgiving assails them that they are of doubtful value.

But whether or not what the writer says of his own work is always to be accepted as the accurate expression of his inner conviction, his attitude towards it, his manner of accepting failure or success, of receiving commendation or criticism or blame, is not uninteresting in itself.

Here, for instance, is a letter which affords not a little insight into the character of the writer:

‘Some time ago,’ he says, ‘I got a very kind and most gratifying letter from you on the subject of my volume. . . . I ought to have acknowledged it sooner, for I felt and still feel that such a testimony in my favour, from a truth-speaking man . . . outweighs a hundred reviews, and I have some thoughts of having it framed and glazed and hung up opposite to me as a set-off against the obliquities of the periodical press, which, if it sometimes found fault in the right place, and nothing more, would, I think, be far better entitled to our thanks than when it picks out our worst things for our best or damns us with faint praise. The recollection of having touched a sympathetic chord in the heart of one who deservedly stands so high . . . will continue to shield me against all the arrows that Malice or Ignorance may draw from their quivers.’

One wonders what would have been the consequence had the one ‘truth-speaking man’ blamed and the hundred reviews praised. But in the meantime, recognising how the arrows of malice and ignorance had stung and rankled, we are glad that their victim had found some salve for the wounds they inflicted.

A more cheerful letter, which has been printed elsewhere, follows. The public has been kind to Macaulay. His *Lays* have met with an unexpected success, and he is not above enjoying it, although modestly ascribing the favourable verdict of the world to the fact that a failure had been anticipated. We should be inclined to ascribe it to another cause. The public is generally kind to those who can dispense with its kindness, and it was not impossibility on this principle that it treated Lord Macaulay so well. His estimate, whether altogether candid or not, has, in the case at least of his verse, been endorsed by posterity.

A curious example of diffidence follows, on the part of a greater man than Macaulay. Reading it, one is tempted to think that the humility expressed is so great that it would have taken a saint—but who shall say that the writer was not one?—not to be proud of it! John Henry Newman—not yet cardinal—has often wished to send his correspondent a book of his own, but though he had published various works had thought none of them likely to be acceptable.

‘Now, however,’ he continues, ‘I thought I would run the risk, and send you the small volume [of verses] I was publishing, though it was a bold step. . . . With so much diffidence did I do so that I first put down your name in the list I sent to my

publishers, then took it off, and ultimately changed my mind and restored it. I am indeed fortunate to have persisted in my intention. I have gained a great and unexpected reward, both in the kind way in which you received it and in the words with which you have accompanied your acknowledgment. I assure you they are not thrown away upon me, and that I am with great sincerity
yours gratefully,
‘JOHN H. NEWMAN.’

And, last of these letters, comes the following. It is that of a man not otherwise than humble, but yet who was not without faith in himself; and in the light of the oblivion which has fallen upon the writer, contains a pathos of its own :

‘To me it appears,’ he says, ‘that the desire for fame, “that last infirmity of noble minds,” weakens as we grow older ; the “fit audience” day by day is minished ; the men we cared for, and who cared for us, are shaken down, or fallen into the yellow leaf, deaf to the charmer, charm he never so wisely.

‘You were happy in winning renown while you were young ; while those whom you looked up to hailed with joy your rising, while, perhaps, your parents might be living to be proud of your reputation.

‘But for me, if the poem I am now finishing should be well reputed of, what remains ? Some two or three eminent men . . . to speak kindly of me ! A few remaining brothers and sisters ! and for the rest,

‘I fruitless mourn to them who cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.’

Here is something touching about the anticipation of a success which is doomed to be unshared ; and possibly it is not the less so because the event proved the regret unnecessary. He need not have troubled himself. Over the grave—it shall be an anonymous one—of his literary reputation, the melancholy old epitaph might fitly be inscribed :

Whether he laughed, whether he cried,
Nobody smiled, nobody sighed.
Where he is and how he fares,
Nobody knows and nobody cares.

It has probably occurred to most of us at times that we should like to have a hand in the redistribution of success, as of other kinds of worldly commodities. But, that being denied to us, it is well to remember for our consolation that one refuge, unique in its absolute security, ever remains open to those to whom contemporaneous opinion has refused fame, that there is one court to

which their appeal can always be carried, and that—and this is not among the least of its advantages—it is one of which the verdict will never be pronounced till they are safely out of hearing.

It is a curious coincidence that, almost next to Macaulay's cheerful recognition of his own success, comes another and a very different estimate of him from that which the kindly public had seen fit to form.

'It has occurred to me,' writes John Stuart Mill, 'since our conversation about Macaulay, that you might like to see a specimen of his statesmanship in India. I therefore send you a draft of a despatch to India, prepared by myself, on one of his measures. The authorities at this house went entirely with me, but Hobhouse would not: the thing dropped, and nothing has been written to India on the subject at all.

'Do not think that a style so controversial as that of this paper is what I think desirable, or what I generally practise in official correspondence: it is by no means so, but this paper was written in ill-health, in the domestic distress of last year, and I may add *against time*, having to be written before I could get away, to go abroad for my health. I left it in hands quite capable of moderating the tone, and altering what seems polemical in its character; and we often find it necessary to write our despatches *first* for effect *here*, upon the Directors and the India Board, and *afterwards* shape them into something more suitable to the dignity of official authority exercised *over gentlemen by gentlemen*.

'In any case you will sympathise in the annoyance of one who, having for years (contrary to the instincts of his own nature, which are all for *rapid* change) assisted in nurturing and raising up a system of cautious and deliberate measures for a great public end, and having been rewarded with a success quite beyond expectation, finds them upset in a week by a coxcombical dilettante litterateur who never did a thing for a practical object in his life.

'Ever yours,

J. S. MILL.'

Again, passing on, we meet with an abrupt transition. 'It must have been a very bold ghost!' The remark recurs to our memory as one or two words in the letter, from Miss Martineau, which comes next in order, catch our eye. We are too much inclined to look at all subjects from a selfish point of view, and perhaps the terrors which might be occasioned to a wanderer from the kingdom of spirits by a meeting with one of the strong-minded

fellowship, to whom his presence might appear in the light of an audacious and unwarranted refutation of their theories, has not been sufficiently taken into account. However that may be, should Miss Martineau have experienced such a visitation, which of us is safe? But we look again and are reassured. It was by a ghost no more substantial, to speak paradoxically, than that of a conversation by which she found herself confronted, and the apparition is only incidentally mentioned in a letter of which the main interest lies in the drowning experience of a certain Captain Beaufort, supplemented by an analogous one on the part of Lord Houghton.

‘When my friend, Mr. R. M. Milnes, came to see me lately,’ Miss Martineau writes, ‘I asked him how I could get at the letter written by Captain Beaufort to Wollaston (on the subject of his drowning sensations), without troubling Captain B., who is about the busiest man of my acquaintance. Mr. Milnes said that he could tell me all that was in the letter; and then told me that in a moment of utmost danger, by a fall of his horse, his feelings had been precisely similar. His foot was entangled in the stirrup, and while his head was among the horse’s feet, and jerked along the road, and he had given up all idea of surviving, he not only *saw* his home when the tidings of his death should be made known there, but *saw* what Captain Beaufort describes—the whole of his life, with its minutest incidents, before him as in a map or picture. His state of feeling was also like Captain B.’s;—he viewed these things, as it were, purely *intellectually*—“without hope or fear, or sense of responsibility.” (I believe these are Captain B.’s words; they are Mr. Milnes’s.)’

It was with a ghost of this conversation with Mr. Milnes which, on opening a book after his departure, she met, and she further proceeds to quote like experiences of her own, suffered in dreams. The idea of Miss Martineau dreaming, whether asleep or awake, strikes one as somewhat incongruous. Her brain was not surely the stuff which dreams are made of, and we are tempted to think that, as in the case of the ghost, it must have been a bold dream by which she was visited. The story has been related of a dream gone astray which, like a misdirected letter, reached the wrong person. One can only hope that in Miss Martineau’s case such a mistake never occurred, and that it was only by visions specially adapted for such a destiny, well considered, carefully chosen, and of which the events were arranged in due and logical sequence, that her slumbers were invaded. But to proceed with her letter. ‘Is there not,’ she continues, ‘an approach to such an experience under

all circumstances of known personal danger;—and in proportion to the urgency of the danger;—allowing for difference of faculty? I am disposed to think so, after a pretty ample experience of such peril in my travels. I imagine it not to be a sensation singular in kind but only in degree;—though perhaps scarcely to be recognised as such, under such prodigious augmentation as the urgency of the excitement may occasion. It now occurs to me that a friend of mine was barely saved from drowning. I will ask him. What struck me in his case was, that the thought of his child seemed to him to bring the blood from the brain back to the heart, and nerved his limbs for one more struggle,—which was seen from the shore, and he was saved.’

There is something in this last narrated experience of yet another of that bevy of friends who appear to have been rescued from imminent destruction in order to contribute their quota of evidence to Miss Martineau’s stock of information, which appeals to us more than the rest. As an American author has said, there are persons who have no right to die—though not unfrequently they disregard their responsibilities and take it.

Before quitting the M.s and concluding this paper, we catch a glimpse of Macready at Sherborne, and perceive that the eminent actor has not, in the retirement of his later years, forgotten or wholly disused the exercise of his art. Possibly, indeed, the part he has now elected to perform is not the easiest of those he has played. For it is to keep Christmas merrily!

‘I strive,’ he writes on Christmas Day, 1857, ‘to make Christmas as old-fashioned as its old customs teach Our old-fashioned house is garnished with holly and mistletoe, the yule-log burns upon the hearth, the wassail-bowl is attempted, and in place of carols Milton’s hymn to the Nativity is repeated by the children at night as a regular Christmas celebration. But I will not detain you with the account of our rusticities. “Time is our tedious” tale “should have an ending. . . .”

‘Always and sincerely yours,

W. C. MACREADY.’

Writing in the middle of the performance, he does not inform us whether his own remarkable histrionic powers, coupled with the attention evidently bestowed upon details—the wassail-bowl, &c.—had made a success of the piece. It is, at all events, an enterprise which others with fewer natural advantages will scarcely be encouraged to attempt.

Melissa's Tour.

LUCY looked across the table at me with a face of blank horror. 'Oh, Vernon,' she cried, 'what are we *ever* to do? And an American at that! This is just *too* ghastly!' It's a habit of Lucy's, I may remark, to talk italics.

I laid down my coffee-cup, and glanced back at her in surprise. 'Why, what's up?' I exclaimed, scanning the envelope close. 'A letter from Oxford, surely. Mrs. Wade, of Christ Church—I thought I knew the hand. And *she's* not an American.'

'Well, look for yourself!' Lucy cried, and tossed the note to me, pouting. I took it and read. I'm aware that I have the misfortune to be only a man, but it really didn't strike me as quite so terrible.

'Dear Mrs. Hancock,—George has just heard that your husband and you are going for a trip to New York this summer. *Could* you manage to do us a *very great* kindness? I hope you won't mind it. We have an American friend—a Miss Easterbrook, of Kansas City—niece of Professor Asa P. Easterbrook, the well-known Yale geologist, who very much wishes to find an escort across the Atlantic. If you would be so good as to take charge of her, and deliver her safely to Dr. Horace Easterbrook, of Hoboken, on your arrival in the States, you would do a good turn to her, and, at the same time, confer an eternal favour on

'Yours very truly,

'EMILY WADE.'

Lucy folded her hands in melodramatic despair. 'Kansas City!' she exclaimed, with a shudder of horror. 'And Asa P. Easterbrook! A geologist, indeed! That horrid Mrs. Wade! She just did it on purpose!'

'It seems to me,' I put in, regarding the letter close, 'she did it merely because she was asked to find a chaperon for the girl; and she wrote the very shortest possible note, in a

perfunctory way, to the very first acquaintance she chanced to hear of who was going to America.'

'Vernon!' my wife exclaimed, with a very decided air, 'you men are such simpletons! You credit everybody always with the best and purest motives. But you're utterly wrong. I can see through that woman. The hateful, hateful wretch! She did it to spite me! Oh, my poor, poor boy; my dear, guileless Bernard!'

Bernard, I may mention, is our eldest son, aged just twenty-four, and a Cambridge graduate. He's a tutor at King's, and though he's a dear good fellow, and a splendid long-stop, I couldn't myself conscientiously say I regard guilelessness as quite his most marked characteristic.

'What are you doing?' I asked, as Lucy sat down with a resolutely determined air at her writing-table in the corner.

'Doing!' my wife replied, with some asperity in her tone. 'Why, answering that hateful, detestable woman!'

I glanced over her shoulder, and followed her pen as she wrote

'My dear Mrs. Wade,—It was *indeed* a delight to us to see your neat little handwriting again. *Nothing* would give us greater pleasure, I'm sure, than to take charge of your friend, who, I'm confident, we shall find a most charming companion. Bernard will be with us, so she won't feel it dull, I trust. We hope to have a very delightful trip, and your happy thought in providing us with a travelling companion will add, no doubt, to all our enjoyment—especially Bernard's. We both join in very kindest regards to Mr. Wade and yourself, and I am ever

'Yours most cordially,

'LUCY B. HANCOCK.'

My wife fastened down the envelope with a very crushing air. 'There, *that* ought to do for her,' she said, glancing up at me triumphantly. 'I should think she could see from that, if she's not as blind as an owl, I've observed her atrocious designs upon Bernard, and mean to checkmate them. If, after such a letter, she has the cheek to send us her Yankee girl to chaperon, I shall consider her lost to all sense of shame and all notions of decency. But she won't, of course. She'll withdraw her unobtrusively.' And Lucy flung the peccant sheet that had roused all this wrath on to the back of the fireplace with offended dignity.

She was wrong, however. By next evening's post a second letter arrived, more discomposing, if possible, to her nerves than the first one.

‘Mrs. Lucy B. Hancock, London.

‘Dear Madam,—I learn from my friend Mrs. Wade, of Oxford College, that you are going to be kind enough to take charge of me across the ocean. I thank you for your courtesy, and will gladly accept your friendly offer. If you will let me know by what steamer you start, I will register my passage right away in Liverpool. Also, if you will be good enough to tell me from what *dépôt* you leave London, and by what train, I will go along with you in the cars. I’m unused to travel alone.

‘Respectfully,

‘MELISSA P. EASTERBROOK.’

Lucy gazed at it in despair. ‘A creature like that!’ she cried, all horror-struck. ‘Oh, my poor dear Bernard! The ocean, she says! Go along with you in the cars! Melissa P. Easterbrook!’

‘Perhaps,’ I said tentatively, ‘she may be better than her name. And at any rate, Bernard’s not *bound* to marry her!’

Lucy darted at me profound volumes of mute feminine contempt. ‘The girl’s pretty,’ she said at last, after a long deep pause, during which I had been made to realise to the full my own utter moral and intellectual nothingness. ‘You may be sure she’s pretty. Mrs. Wade wouldn’t have foisted her upon us if she wasn’t pretty, but unspeakable. It’s a vile plot on her part to destroy my peace of mind. You won’t believe it, Vernon: but I *know* that woman. And what does the girl mean by signing herself “Respectfully,” I wonder?’

‘It’s the American way,’ I ventured gently to interpose.

‘So I gather,’ my wife answered with a profound accent of contempt. To her, anything that isn’t done in the purest English way stands, *ipso facto*, self-condemned immediately.

A day or two later a second letter arrived from Miss Easterbrook, in reply to one of Lucy’s, suggesting a rendezvous. I confess it drew up in my mind a somewhat painful picture. I began to believe my wife’s fears were in some ways well grounded.

‘Mrs. Lucy B. Hancock, London’ (as before).

‘Dear Madam,—I thank you for yours, and will meet you on the day and hour you mention at St. Pancras *dépôt*. You will know me when you see me, because I shall wear a dove-coloured dress, with bonnet to match, and a pair of grey spectacles.

‘Respectfully,

‘MELISSA P. EASTERBROOK.’

I laid it down and sighed. 'A New England schoolmarm!' I exclaimed with a groan. 'It sounds rather terrible. A dove-coloured dress, and a pair of grey spectacles! I fancy I can picture her to myself—a tall and bony person of a certain age, with corkscrew curls, who reads improving books, and has views of her own about the fulfilment of prophecy.'

But as my spirits went down, so Lucy's went up, like the old man and woman in the cottage weather-glass. 'That looks more promising,' she said. 'The spectacles are good. Perhaps after all dear Bernard may escape. I don't think he's at all the sort of person to be taken with a dove-coloured bonnet.'

For some days after Bernard came home from Cambridge we chaffed a good deal among ourselves about Miss Melissa Easterbrook. Bernard took quite my view about the spectacles and dress. He even drew on an envelope a fancy portrait of Miss Easterbrook, as he said himself, 'from documentary evidence.' It represented a typical schoolmarm of the most virulent order, and was calculated to strike terror into the receptive mind of ingenuous youth on simple inspection.

At last the day came when we were to go to Liverpool. We arrived at St. Pancras in very good time, and looked about on the platform for a tall and hard-faced person of Transatlantic aspect, arrayed in a dove-coloured dress and a pair of grey spectacles. But we looked in vain: nobody about seemed to answer to the description. At last Bernard turned to my wife with a curious smile. 'I think I've spotted her, mother,' he said, waving his hand vaguely to the right. 'That lady over yonder—by the door of the refreshment-room. Don't you see? That must be Melissa.' For we knew her only as Melissa already among ourselves: it had been raised to the mild rank of a family witticism.

I looked in the direction he suggested, and paused for certainty. There, irresolute by the door and gazing about her timidly with inquiring eyes, stood the prettiest, tiniest, most shrinking little Western girl you ever saw in your life—attired, as she said, in a dove-coloured dress, with bonnet to match, and a pair of grey spectacles. But oh, what a dove-coloured dress! Walter Crane might have designed it—one of those perfect travelling costumes of which the American girl seems to possess a monopoly; and the spectacles—well, the spectacles, though undoubtedly real, added just a touch of piquancy to an otherwise almost painfully timid and retiring little figure. The moment I

set eyes on Melissa Easterbrook, I will candidly admit, I was her captive at once ; and even Lucy, as she looked at her, relaxed her face involuntarily into a sympathetic smile. As a rule, Lucy might pose as a perfect model of the British matron in her ampler and maturer years—‘calmly terrible,’ as an American observer once described the genus : but at sight of Melissa she melted without a struggle. ‘Poor wee little thing, how pretty she is!’ she exclaimed with a start. You will readily admit that was a great deal, from Lucy.

Melissa came forward tentatively, a dainty blush half rising on her rather pale and delicate little cheek. ‘Mrs. Hancock?’ she said in an inquiring tone, with just the faintest suspicion of an American accent in her musical small voice. Lucy took her hand cordially. ‘I was sure it was you, ma’am,’ Melissa went on with pretty confidence, looking up into her face, ‘because Mrs. Wade told me you’d be as kind to me as a mother ; and the moment I saw you I just said to myself, “That *must* be Mrs. Hancock : she’s so sweetly motherly.” How good of you to burden yourself with a stranger like me ! I hope indeed I won’t be too much trouble.’

That was the beginning. I may as well say, first as last, we were all of us taken by storm ‘right away’ by Melissa. Lucy herself struck her flag unconditionally before a single shot was fired, and Bernard and I, hard hit at all points, surrendered at discretion. She was the most charming little girl the human mind can conceive. Our cold English language fails, in its roughness, to describe her. She was *petite, mignonne*, graceful, fairy-like, yet with a touch of Yankee quaintness and a delicious *espièglerie* that made her absolutely unique in my experience of women. We had utterly lost our hearts to her before ever we reached Liverpool ; and, strange to say, I believe the one of us whose heart was most completely gone was, if only you’ll believe it, that calmly terrible Lucy.

Melissa’s most winning characteristic, however, as it seemed to me, was her perfect frankness. As we whirled along on our way across England, she told us everything about herself, her family, her friends, her neighbours, and the population of Kansas City in general. Not obtrusively or egotistically—of egotism Melissa would be wholly incapable—but in a certain timid, confiding, half-childlike way, as of the lost little girl, that was absolutely captivating. ‘Oh no, ma’am,’ she said, in answer to one of Lucy’s earliest questions, ‘I didn’t come over alone. I think

I'd be afraid to. I came with a whole squad of us who were doing Europe. A prominent lady in Kansas City took charge of the square lot. And I got as far as Rome with them, through Germany and Switzerland, and then my money wouldn't run to it any further: so I had to go back. Travelling comes high in Europe, what with hotels and fees and having to pay to get your baggage checked. And that's how I came to want an escort.'

Bernard smiled good-naturedly. 'Then you had only a fixed sum,' he asked, 'to make your European tour with?'

'That's so, sir,' Melissa answered, looking up at him quizzically through those pretty grey spectacles. 'I'd put away quite a little sum of my own to make this trip upon. It was my only chance of seeing Europe and improving myself a piece. I knew when I started I couldn't go all the round trip with the rest of my party: but I thought I'd set out with them, any way, and go ahead as long as my funds held out; and then when I was through I'd turn about and come home again.'

'But you put away the money yourself?' Lucy asked, with a little start of admiring surprise.

'Yes, ma'am,' Melissa answered sagely. 'I know it. I saved it.'

'From your allowance?' Lucy suggested, from the restricted horizon of her English point of view.

Melissa laughed a merry little laugh of amusement. 'Oh, no,' she said; 'from my salary.'

'From your salary!' Bernard put in, looking down at her with an inquiring glance.

'Yes, sir; that's it,' Melissa answered, all unabashed. 'You see, for four years I was a clerk in the Post Office.' She pronounced it 'clurk,' but that's a detail.

'Oh, indeed!' Bernard echoed. He was burning to know how, I could see, but politeness forbade him to press Melissa on so delicate a point any further.

Melissa, however, herself supplied at once the missing information. 'My father was postmaster in our city,' she said, simply, 'under the last administration—President Blanco's, you know—and he made me one of his clerks, of course, when he'd gotten the place; and as long as the fun went on, I saved all my salary for a tour in Europe.'

'And at the end of four years?' Lucy said.

'Our party went out,' Melissa put in, confidentially. 'So, when the trouble began, my father was dismissed, and I had just enough left to take me as far as Rome, as I told you.'

I was obliged to explain parenthetically, to allay Lucy's wonderment, that in America the whole *personnel* of every local Government office changes almost completely with each incoming President.

'That's so, sir,' Melissa assented, with a wise little nod. 'And as I didn't think it likely our folks would get in again in a hurry—the country's had enough of us—I just thought I'd make the best of my money when I'd got it.'

'And you used it all up in giving yourself a holiday in Europe?' Lucy exclaimed, half reproachfully. To her economic British mind such an expenditure of capital seemed horribly wasteful.

'Yes, ma'am,' Melissa answered, all unconscious of the faint disapproval implied in Lucy's tone. 'You see, I'd never been anywhere much away from Kansas City before; and I thought this was a special opportunity to go abroad, and visit the picture-galleries and cathedrals of Europe, and enlarge my mind, and get a little culture. To us, a glimpse of Europe's an intellectual necessary.'

'Oh, then, you regarded your visit as largely educational?' Bernard put in, with increasing interest. Though he's a fellow and tutor of King's, I will readily admit that Bernard's personal tastes lie rather in the direction of rowing and football than of general culture; but still, the American girl's point of view decidedly attracted him by its novelty in a woman.

'That's so, sir,' Melissa answered once more, in her accustomed affirmative. 'I took it as a sort of university trip. I graduated in Europe. In America, of course, wherever you go, all you can see's everywhere just the same, purely new and American. The language, the manners, the type don't vary: in Europe, you cross a frontier or a ribbon of sea, and everything's different. Now, on this trip of ours, we went first to Chester, to glimpse a typical old English town—those Rows, oh! how lovely!—and then to Leamington, for Warwick Castle and Kenilworth. Kenilworth's just glorious, isn't it?—with its mouldering red walls and its dark green ivy, and the ghost of Amy Robsart walking up and down upon the close-shaven English grass-plots.'

'I've heard it's very beautiful,' Bernard admitted gravely.

'What! you live so close, and you've never *been* there!' Melissa exclaimed, in frank surprise.

Bernard allowed with a smile he had been so culpably negligent.

'And Stratford-on-Avon, too!' Melissa went on, enthusiast-

ically, her black eyes beaming. 'Isn't Stratford just charming! I don't care for the interminable Shakespeare nuisance, you know—that's all too new and made up; we could raise a Shakespeare house like that in Kansas City any day; but the church, and the elms, and the swans, and the river! I made such a sweet little sketch of them all, so soft and peaceful. At least, the place itself was as sweet as a corner of heaven, and I tried as well as I could in my way to sketch it.'

'I suppose it is very pretty,' Bernard replied, in a meditative tone.

Melissa started visibly. 'What! have you never been there, either?' she exclaimed, taken aback. 'Well, that is odd, now! You live in England, and have never run over to Stratford-on-Avon! Why, you do surprise me! But, there! I suppose you English live in the midst of culture, as it were, and can get to it all right away at any time; so, perhaps, you don't think quite as much of it as we do, who have to save up our money, perhaps for years, to get, for once in our lives, just a single passing glimpse of it. You live at Cambridge, you see; you must be steeped in culture, right down to the finger-ends.'

Bernard modestly responded, twirling his manly moustache, that the river and the running-ground, he feared, were more in his way than art or architecture.

'And where else did you go besides England?' Lucy asked really interested.

'Well, ma'am, from London we went across by Ostend to Bruges, where I studied the Memlings, and made a few little copies from them,' Melissa answered, with her sunny smile. 'It's such a quaint old place, Bruges. Life seems to flow as stagnant as its own canals. Have you ever been there?'

'Oh, charming!' Lucy answered; 'most delightful and quiet. But—er—who are the Memlings? I don't quite recollect them.'

Melissa gazed at her, open-eyed. 'The Memlings?' she said, slowly; 'why, you've just missed the best thing at Bruges if you haven't seen them. They've such a naïve charm of their own, so innocent and sympathetic. They're in the Hôpital de St. Jean, you know, where Memling put them. And it's so delightful to see great pictures like those—though they're tiny little things to look at—in their native surroundings, exactly as they were first painted—the Chasse de Ste. Ursule, and all those other lovely things, so infantile in their simplicity, and yet so exquisitely graceful, and pure, and beautiful. I don't know as I saw anything

in Europe to equal them for pathos in their own way—except, of course, the *Fra Angelicos* at San Marco in Florence.’

‘I don’t think I’ve seen them,’ Lucy murmured, with an uncomfortable air. I could see it was just dawning upon her, in spite of her patronising, that this Yankee girl, with her imperfect command of the English tongue, knew a vast deal more about some things worth notice than she herself did. ‘And where did you go then, dear?’

‘Oh, from Bruges we went on to Ghent,’ Melissa answered, leaning back, and looking as pretty as a picture herself in her sweet little travelling-dress, ‘to see the great Van Eyck, the “Adoration of the Lamb,” you know—that magnificent panel-picture. And then we went to Brussels, where we had Dierick Bouts and all the later Flemings; and to Antwerp, for Rubens and Vandyck and Quintin Matsys; and the Hague after that, for Rembrandt and Paul Potter; and Amsterdam in the end, for Van der Helst and Gerard Dow, and the late Dutch painters. So, you see, we had quite an artistic tour—we followed up the development of Netherlandish art, from beginning to end, in historical order. It was just delightful.’

‘I went to Antwerp once,’ Bernard put in, somewhat sheepishly, still twirling his moustache; ‘but it was on my way to Switzerland; and I didn’t see much, as far as I can recollect, except the cathedral and the quay and the hotel I was stopping at.’

‘Ah, that’s all very well for *you*,’ Melissa answered, with a rather envious air. ‘You can see these things any day. But for us, the chance comes only once in a lifetime, and we must make the most of it.’

Well, in such converse as this we reached Liverpool in due time, and went next morning on board our steamer. We had a lovely passage out, and all the way, the more we saw of Melissa, the more we liked her. To be sure, Lucy received a terrible shock the third day out, when she asked Melissa what she meant to do when she returned to Kansas City. ‘You won’t go into the Post Office again, I suppose, dear?’ she said kindly, for we had got by that time on most friendly terms with our little Melissa.

‘I guess not,’ Melissa answered. ‘No such luck any more. I’ll have to go back again to the store as usual.’

‘The store!’ Lucy repeated, bewildered. ‘I—I don’t quite understand you.’

‘Well, the shop, I presume you’d call it,’ Melissa answered, smiling. ‘My father’s gotten a book-store in Kansas City; and

before I went into the Post Office I helped him at the counter. In fact, I was his saleswoman.'

'I assure you, Vernon,' Lucy remarked in our berth that night, 'if an Englishwoman had said it to me, I'd have been obliged to apologise to her for having forced her to confess it, and I don't know what way I should ever have looked to hide my face while she was talking about it. But with Melissa it's all so different, somehow. She spoke as if it was the most natural thing on earth for her father to keep a shop, and she didn't seem the least little bit in the world ashamed of it either.'

'Why should she?' I answered, with my masculine bluntness. But that was perhaps a trifle too advanced for Lucy. Melissa was exercising a widening influence on my wife's point of view with astonishing rapidity: but still, a perfect lady must always draw a line somewhere.

All the way across, indeed, Melissa's lively talk was a constant delight and pleasure to every one of us. She was so taking, that girl, so confidential, so friendly. We really loved her. Then her quaint little Americanisms were as pretty as herself—not only her 'Yes, sirs,' and her 'No, ma'ams,' her 'I guess' and 'That's so,' but her fresh Western ideas and her infinite play of fancy in the Queen's English. She turned it as a potter turns his clay. In Britain, our mother tongue has crystallised long since into set forms and phrases. In America, it has still the plasticity of youth; it is fertile in novelty—nay, even in surprises. And Melissa knew how to twist it deftly into unexpected quips and incongruous conjunctions. Her talk ran on like a limpid brook, with a musical ripple playing ever on the surface. As for Bernard, he helped her about the ship like a brother, as she moved lightly around with her sylphlike little form among the ropes and capstans. Melissa liked to be helped, she said: she didn't believe one bit in woman's rights; no, indeed—she was a great deal too fond of being taken care of for that. And who wouldn't take care of her, that delicate little thing, like some choice small masterpiece of cunning workmanship? Why, she almost looked as if she were made of Venetian glass, and a fall on deck would shatter her into a thousand fragments.

And her talk all the way was of the joys of Europe—the castles and abbeys she was leaving behind, the pictures and statues she had seen and admired, the pictures and statues she had left unvisited. 'Somebody told me in Paris,' she said to me one day, as she hung on my arm on deck and looked up into my

face confidently with that childlike smile of hers, 'the only happy time in an American woman's life is the period when she's just got over the first poignant regret at having left Europe, and hasn't yet reached the point when she makes up her mind that, come what will, she really *must* go back again. And I thought, for my part, then my happiness was fairly spoilt for life, for I shall never be able again to afford the journey.'

'Melissa, my child,' I said, looking down at those ripe rich lips, 'in this world one never knows what may turn up next. I've observed on my way down the path of life that when fruit hangs rosy-red on the tree by the wall, some passer-by or other is pretty sure in the end to pluck it.'

But that was too much for Melissa's American modesty. She looked down and blushed like a rose herself. But she answered me nothing.

A night or two before we reached New York I was standing in the gloom, half hidden by a boat on the davits amidships, enjoying my vespertine cigar in the cool of evening; and between the puffs I caught from time to time stray snatches of a conversation going on softly in the twilight between Bernard and Melissa. I had noticed of late, indeed, that Bernard and Melissa walked much on deck in the evening together; but this particular evening they walked long and late, and their conversation seemed to me (if I might judge by fragments) particularly confidential. The bits of it I caught were mostly, it is true, on Melissa's part (when Bernard said anything, he said it lower). She was talking enthusiastically of Venice, Florence, Pisa, Rome, with occasional flying excursions into Switzerland and the Tyrol. Once as she passed I heard something murmured low about Botticelli's 'Primavera'; when next she went by, it was the Alps from Mürren; a third time, again, it was the mosaics at St. Mark's, and Titian's 'Assumption,' and the Doge's Palace. What so innocent as art, in the moonlight, on the ocean?

At last Bernard paused just opposite where I stood (for they didn't perceive me), and said very earnestly, 'Look here, Melissa,'—he had called her Melissa almost from the first moment, and she seemed to prefer it, it seemed so natural—'Look here, Melissa. Do you know, when you talk about things like that, you make me feel so dreadfully ashamed of myself.'

'Why so, Mr. Hancock?' Melissa asked innocently.

'Well, when I think what opportunities I've had, and how little I've used them,' Bernard exclaimed with vehemence, 'and

then reflect how few you've got, and how splendidly you've made the best of them, I just blush, I tell you, Melissa, for my own laziness.'

'Perhaps,' Melissa interposed with a grave little air, 'if one had always been brought up among it all, one wouldn't think quite so much of it. It's the novelty of antiquity that makes it so charming to people from my country. I suppose it seems quite natural, now, to you that your parish church should be six hundred years old, and have tombs in the chancel with Elizabethan ruffs or its floor inlaid with Plantagenet brasses. To us, all that seems mysterious and in a certain sort of way one might almost say magical. Nobody can love Europe quite so well, I'm sure, who has lived in it from a child. *You* grew up to many things that burst fresh upon us at last with all the intense delight of a new sensation.'

They stood still as they spoke and looked hard at one another. There was a minute's pause. Then Bernard began again. 'Melissa,' he faltered out, in a rather tremulous voice, 'are you sorry to go home again?'

'I just hate it!' Melissa answered with a vehement burst. Then she added after a second, 'But I've enjoyed the voyage.'

'You'd like to live in Europe?' Bernard asked.

'I should love it!' Melissa replied. 'I'm fond of my folks, of course, and I should be sorry to leave them; but I just love Europe. I shall never go again, though. I shall come right away back to Kansas City now, and keep store for father for the rest of my natural existence.'

'It seems hard,' Bernard went on, musing, 'that anybody like you, Melissa, with such a natural love of art and of all beautiful things—anybody who can draw such sweet dreams of delight as those heads you showed us after Filippo Lippi—anybody who can appreciate Florence and Venice and Rome as you do, should have to live all her life in a Far Western town, and meet with so little sympathy as you're likely to find there.'

'That's the rub,' Melissa replied, looking up into his face with such a confiding look (if any pretty girl had looked up at *me* like that, I should have known what to do with her; but Bernard was twenty-four, and young men are modest). 'That's the rub, Mr. Hancock. I like—well, European society so very much better. Our men are nice enough in their own way, don't you know; but they somehow lack polish—at least, out West, I mean—in Kansas City. Europeans mayn't be very much better

when you get right at them, perhaps; but on the outside, any way, to *me*, they're more attractive somehow.'

There was another long pause, during which I felt as guilty as ever eavesdropper before me. Yet I was glued to the spot. I could hardly escape. At last Bernard spoke again. 'I should like to have gone round with you on your tour, Melissa,' he said; 'I don't know Italy. I don't suppose by myself I could even appreciate it. But if *you* were by my side, you'd have taught me what it all meant; and then I think I might perhaps understand it.'

Melissa drew a deep breath. 'I wish I could take it all over again,' she answered, half sighing. 'And I didn't see Naples, either. That was a great disappointment. I should like to have seen Naples, I must confess, so as to know I could at least in the end die happy.'

'Why do you go back?' Bernard asked, suddenly, with a bounce, looking down at that wee hand that trembled upon the taffrail.

'Because I can't help myself,' Melissa answered, in a quivering voice. 'I should like—I should like to live always in England.'

'Have you any special preference for any particular town?' Bernard asked, moving closer to her—though, to be sure, he was very, very near already.

'N—no; n—none in particular,' Melissa stammered out faintly, half sidling away from him.

'Not Cambridge, for example?' Bernard asked, with a deep gulp and an audible effort.

I felt it would be unpardonable for me to hear any more. I had heard already many things not intended for me. I sneaked off, unperceived, and left those two alone to complete that conversation.

Half an hour later—it was a calm moonlight night—Bernard rushed down eagerly into the saloon to find us. 'Father and mother,' he said, with a burst, 'I want you up on deck for just ten minutes. There's something up there I should like so much to show you.'

'Not whales?' I asked hypocritically, suppressing a smile.

'No, not whales,' he replied; 'something much more interesting.'

We followed him blindly, Lucy much in doubt what the thing might be, and I much in wonder, after Mrs. Wade's letter, how Lucy might take it.

At the top of the companion-ladder Melissa stood waiting

for us, demure but subdued, with a still timider look than ever upon that sweet shrinking small face of hers. Her heart beat hard, I could see by the movement of her bodice, and her breath came and went; but she stood there like a dove, in her dove-coloured travelling-dress.

'Mother,' Bernard began, 'Melissa's obliged to come back to America, don't you know, without having ever seen Naples. It seems a horrid shame she should miss seeing it. She hadn't money enough left, you recollect, to take her there.'

Lucy gazed at him, unsuspicious. 'It does seem a pity,' she answered, sympathetically. 'She'd enjoy it so much. I'm sorry she hasn't been able to carry out all her programme.'

'And, mother,' Bernard went on, his eyes fixed hard on hers, 'how awfully she'd be thrown away on Kansas City! I can't bear to think of her going back to "keep store" there.'

'For my part, I think it positively wicked,' Lucy answered with a smile, 'and I can't think what—well, people in England—are about to allow her to do it.'

I opened my eyes wide. Did Lucy know what she was saying? Or had Melissa, then, fascinated her—the arch little witch!—as she had fascinated the rest of us?

But Bernard, emboldened by this excellent opening, took Melissa by the hand, as if in due form to present her. 'Mother,' he said tenderly, leading the wee thing forward, 'and father, too; *this* is what I wanted to show you—the girl I'm engaged to!'

I paused and trembled. I waited for the thunderbolt. But no thunderbolt fell. On the contrary, Lucy stepped forward, and, under cover of the mast, caught Melissa in her arms and kissed her twice over. 'My dear child,' she cried, pressing her hard, 'my dear little daughter, I don't know which of you two I ought most to congratulate.'

'But I do,' Bernard murmured low. And, his father though I am, I murmured to myself, 'And so do I, also.'

'Then you're not ashamed of me, mother dear,' Melissa whispered, burying her dainty little head on Lucy's shoulder, 'because I kept store in Kansas City?'

Lucy rose above herself, in the excitement of the moment. 'My darling wee daughter,' she answered, kissing her tenderly again, 'it's Kansas City alone that ought to be ashamed of itself for putting *you* to keep store—such a sweet little gem as you are!'

The Garden.

MY garden was lovely to see,
 For all things fair,
 Sweet flowers and blossoms rare,
 I had planted there.
 There were pinks and lilies and stocks,
 Sweet grey and white stocks, and rose and rue,
 And clematis white and blue,
 And pansies and daisies and phlox.
 And the lawn was trim, and the trees were shady,
 And all things were ready to greet my lady
 On the Life's-love-crowning day
 When she should come
 To her lover's home,
 To give herself to me.

I saw the red of the roses—
 The royal roses that bloomed for her sake :
 'They shall lie,' I said, 'where my heart's hopes lie :
 They shall droop on her heart and die.'

I dreamed in the orchard-closes :
 'Tis here we will walk in the July days,
 When the paths and the lawn are ablaze ;
 We will walk here, and look at our life's great bliss,
 And thank God for this.'

I leaned where the jasmine white
 Wreathed all my window round :
 Here we will lean,
 I and my queen,
 And look out on the broad moonlight :
 For there shall be moonlight—bright—
 On my wedding-night.

She never saw the flowers
That were hers from their first sweet hours.
The roses, the pinks, and the dark heartsease
Died in my garden, ungathered, forlorn ;
Only the jasmine, the lilies, the white, white rose,
They were gathered—to honour and sorrow born.
They lay round her, touched her close.
The jasmine stars—white stars, that about our window
their faint light shed,
Lay round her head.
And the white, white roses lay on her breast,
And a long, white lily lay in her hand ;
They lie by her—rest with her rest.
But I, unhonoured, unblest—
I stand outside,
In the ruined garden solitude—
Where she never stood—
On the trim green sod
Which she never trod ;
And the red, red roses grow and blow,
— As if anyone cared
How they fared !
And the gate of Eden is shut ; and I stand
And see the Angel with flaming sword—
Life's pitiless Lord—
And I know I never may pass—
Alas ! alas !
Oh Rose ! my rose !
I never may reach the place where she grows,
A rose in the garden of God.

E. NESBIT.

Concerning the Cuckoo.

THE cuckoo has the distinction of being one of the best known and least understood of our British birds. If all the literature which this strange bird has inspired were collected together it would form a small library in itself. Yet there is scarcely a point in connection with its curious life-history which is not from time to time made the subject of question and even contradiction by competent observers. The brief, mysterious visits to our shores, the sudden appearance everywhere in the early spring, and disappearance equally sudden when the year has but reached its zenith, the shy and unsociable habits, and above all the legend which from time immemorial has attributed to the bird conduct both as a parent and a nestling so unnatural as to be almost without a parallel, all combine to give the cuckoo a place in popular imagination which no other bird can lay claim to.

When the month of April reaches its teens the cuckoo comes amongst us in the south of England. It goes north with the advancing year, and appears generally in Scotland about the beginning of May. One of the first things which attracts the attention of every observer of the habits of the bird is the manner in which it distributes itself over every variety of country in these annual invasions. Other migrants have their favourite haunts: the nightingale seeks the copses of the southern counties, the lark and plover the open moors, the swallow the pastures, open waters, and the haunts of men. The mud-flats, the deep woods, and the rocky places have each their special *habitués*. But the cuckoo is to be found nearly everywhere. It takes the woods of Hampshire as familiarly as the trim poplars of the Continent, and it spreads itself over hill, dale, and open country indiscriminately. The bird is common round the fringes of London, apparently because of the presence of the numerous thickets in which it delights; but it remains where trees and even hedgerows fail, for it may be seen in the bare mountain-limestone country, with not a bush in sight, flying familiarly from stone to stone and making the rocks echo with its well-known call.

The cuckoo cannot properly be viewed from one standpoint. All its habits form part of a single study. Even this apparently incidental question of wide distribution and adaptation to diverse localities is probably intimately associated with the other unusual habits of the bird, and must be considered in connection with them.

Of the actual existence of the most widely reputed habit of the cuckoo, that which has led to the popular estimation of the bird as a monster of treachery and immorality, there can now be no possible doubt. The tradition respecting it is of great antiquity; but, unlike most traditions in natural history, it has been for long supported by observations numerous and authentic enough to satisfy the most exacting. Where the cuckoo is plentiful almost any painstaking observer will be able to find for himself the intruder's egg in the nest of one or other of the species of birds commonly made use of. The mother has been caught by many observers in the very act of foisting her offspring on her neighbours, and the young bird has been followed in every step of its adventurous career from the egg to the adult. Nothing in fact has been left undone necessary to satisfy the utmost scruples of anyone gifted with that sceptical bias in these matters which the pursuit of science is supposed to demand.

The eggs of the cuckoo have been found in the nests of nearly every species of bird in Great Britain and the Continent suitable for its purpose. The nests principally made use of in England are those of the meadow-pipet, hedge-sparrow, and pied-wagtail. In certain districts where the reed-warbler is common the nest of this bird is a great favourite, and the same may be said of the redstart. Although the range of choice which the cuckoo exercises is very wide—Messrs. Sharpe and Dresser giving, for instance, a list of ninety-two species of European birds, including thirty-seven British species, whose nests are used—it is a noteworthy fact that the bird nearly always chooses a nest belonging to a species the natural food of which is suitable to her own young. The foster-parent is thus nearly always insectivorous, the nests of birds which feed on vegetable substances being rarely used. Even the best regulated instinct, of course, sometimes errs, and the cuckoo's is no exception to the rule, the unnatural parent sometimes providing foster-parents equally unnatural for her young by occasionally depositing her eggs in nests such as those of the wood-pigeon and house-sparrow. But the instinct which leads the bird to choose the right nest is well marked despite these occasional lapses, and we shall have a word to say directly as to the manner in which it

probably originated, in common with the cuckoo's other peculiar instincts.

Nothing connected with the cuckoo has given rise to so much discussion as the extraordinary character of its egg and the manner in which it is placed in the nest chosen to receive it. Everyone who has collected birds' eggs, or indulged in the juvenile habit of birds'-nesting, or who has even gone so far as to take an intelligent interest in the dozen of new-laid ordered from the grocer's, must have noticed one rudimentary fact respecting the eggs of birds. The eggs of each species have certain marked characteristics which distinguish them from those of other birds: the common fowl's egg is white, the duck's pale blue, the thrush's speckled green, the skylark's dark brown. The eggs of each kind of bird also vary but little in size. Now, strange to say, the cuckoo's egg is a marked exception to this almost invariable rule. The eggs of the cuckoo have no particular colour. They have been found green, grey, blue, grey-mottled, green-mottled, and pure white. Neither have they any particular size. They vary in the most puzzling fashion, from the size of a skylark's egg to almost that of a pigeon's. Few of the authorities on the subject can agree even as to what the average size should be. For instance, two of the best known, to whom I refer at random, state the size of the cuckoo's egg to be respectively $\frac{3}{4}$ inch by $\frac{2}{3}$ inch, and 1 inch to 1.8 inch by .75 inch to .61 inch—a sufficiently wide difference to almost suggest whether they are really speaking of the egg of the same bird.

Closely associated with this question of the unusual variation in the appearance and size of the cuckoo's egg is that of the character of the nest in which it is laid. Formerly, before the habits of the cuckoo had been made the subject of such close study, the prevailing idea was that the bird sought out a convenient nest, apparently at random, and laid an egg in it in the absence of the owner. More systematic observation has, however, revealed that the cuckoo's meanness has more method in it, and method too which is apparently most skilfully devised to attain certain ends. A great number of authentic observations, made in a variety of places, appear to have established it as a fact beyond doubt that the eggs of the cuckoo are as a rule deposited in the nests of birds whose eggs approximate both in size and appearance to the strange egg placed among them. The view previously held that the cuckoo actually laid her egg in the chosen nest has been considerably modified by observations both in this country and on

the Continent. It seems still probable that the cuckoo sometimes lays in the nest, particularly when it is open and conveniently situated, but the general habit of the bird would appear to be to first lay her egg on the ground and then to take it in her bill and deposit it in the selected nest.

This method of depositing the egg, taken in connection with the acknowledged fact of the variability of the cuckoo's eggs and their general approximation in appearance to the eggs with which they are placed, has led to the formulation of two theories on the subject, both of which are steadfastly held to by their advocates. According to the first view, the cuckoo, having chosen the nest in which she is about to lay, has the extraordinary power of being able to control at will the appearance of her egg. She is supposed to be influenced in some unknown way by the surroundings or the appearance of the eggs already in the nest, and to produce in consequence an egg resembling those of the foster-parent. The other theory credits the bird with scarcely less originality, though with more shrewdness. According to the second view, having laid an egg on the ground, she takes a kind of mental inventory of its appearance, and then proceeds to deposit it in the nest of the bird whose egg it resembles.

Without staying at this point to discuss these and other theories which have been put forward to account for the curious fact that there is usually a general resemblance between the cuckoo's egg and those of the widely different species of birds with which it is found, it may be mentioned that it is likely that the cuckoo often lays on the ground without the intention of placing the egg in any nest, and even possibly occasionally settles all question of its destination by quietly making a meal of it. The bird seems in some manner to have obtained the reputation of an egg-sucker, but whether on the strength of reliable evidence or not it seems hard to say. I recently caught a cuckoo in the act of laying on the ground in somewhat peculiar circumstances which have some bearing on this point. Returning across Wimbledon Common about dusk on June 12, 1890, on passing a thicket in one of the retired corners, I saw a cuckoo, which was calling, flying low and in a peculiar way over the bracken. I stopped and watched the bird, and saw it alight down suddenly out of sight in a meaningful way. Hastening up to the place, I came upon two cuckoos in a dry open space among the ferns, one of them apparently in the act of depositing an egg. Both birds flew awkwardly away on my approach, and I took possession of the egg, which was quite warm. Most careful search was made

all round the spot within a considerable radius, in the hope of discovering the nest of some small bird for which the egg might have been intended, but no nest of any kind was found. A point which, however, seems worthy of remark is that on afterwards returning to the spot where the egg was picked up I found the broken remains of a similar egg which had apparently been sucked. The conclusion which presented itself to my mind at the time was that the bird had not intended to deposit the egg in any nest. She had probably laid in the same spot before, and had either feasted on the first egg herself or had left it, and it had been found and sucked by some animal. The second egg would most probably have suffered the same fate.

It is somewhat strange to find that there is still a difference of opinion as regards the behaviour of the nestling cuckoo towards the young of its foster-parents. That the presence of the young bird is fatal to the other birds in the nest is universally conceded, but that the interloper actually and deliberately throws out the rightful owners of the nest, in order to monopolise the whole of the parental care, is still questioned by writers of authority. The presence in the nest of a bird so greedy as the young cuckoo, and usually so much bigger than its fellows, would, it is urged, in any case bring about the death of the latter, and without it being necessary to assume any *malice prepense* on the part of the young cuckoo. Even a writer of such weight as Mr. Seebohm seems inclined to class the accounts of the young cuckoo's action towards its fellows in the same category with ghost stories.

There seem, however, to be no grounds of acquitting the bird of the charge of deliberately and intentionally causing the death of its fellow-nestlings. Not only is it certain that the young cuckoo ejects the other birds from the nest, but it would appear to be also true that several details of its anatomical structure, and even the temper and disposition of the bird during the first few days of its life, have been acquired for the special purpose of executing its murderous work as swiftly and efficiently as possible. Soon after the young cuckoo is hatched out it exhibits an extraordinarily irritable and restless disposition. It keeps on beating its stumps of wings, it tries to get underneath anything that may be placed in the nest, and as it grows older it will spar with its wings and peck at the finger if placed near it. Anyone may see by a simple experiment how the bird regards itself in relation to all comers. Not only will it put out the other occupants, but it will throw out pieces of wood, lumps of earth, the eggs of other birds, or anything of the kind which may be placed by the observer

in the nest. The other nestlings are usually disposed of at once—that is to say, during the first or second day—and any eggs that may still remain unhatched in the nest are put over the side at the same time. The young cuckoo is aided in its remarkable efforts by a curious depression on the back behind the shoulders, which is said to disappear as the bird grows and after it has ceased to be useful. It is asserted by Sharpe and Dresser that the restless habit also ceases after fourteen days.

The surprising and exceptional nature of this phenomenon, and in some measure also the difficulty of accepting the explanation usually given of the origin of the instinct in the young bird, must be held to account for the disposition shown to accept accounts of it with reserve. One of the most graphic sketches of the occurrence by an eye-witness is that in Mr. Gould's *Birds of Great Britain*. The account by Mrs. Blackburn, who watched the movements of the young cuckoo, is full of interest. The nest under observation was that of the common meadow-pipet, and it had at first two eggs in it besides that of the cuckoo. 'At one visit,' continues Mrs. Blackburn, 'the pipets were found to be hatched, but not the cuckoo. At the next visit, which was after an interval of forty-eight hours, we found the young cuckoo alone in the nest, and both the young pipets lying down the bank, about ten inches from the margin of the nest, but quite lively after being warmed in the hand. They were replaced in the nest beside the cuckoo, which struggled about until it got its back under one of them, when it climbed backwards directly up the open side of the nest, and hitched the pipet from its back on to the edge. It then stood quite upright on its legs, which were straddled wide apart, with the claws firmly fixed half-way down the inside of the nest, among the interlacing fibres of which the nest was woven, and, stretching its wings apart and backwards, it elbowed the pipet fairly over the margin so far that its struggles took it down the bank instead of back into the nest. After this the cuckoo stood a minute or two, feeling back with its wings, as if to make sure that the pipet was fairly overboard, and then subsided into the bottom of the nest.' The ejected bird was replaced, but on again visiting the nest on the following morning both pipets were found dead out of the nest. Mrs. Blackburn continues: 'The cuckoo was perfectly naked, without the vestige of a feather, or even a hint of future feathers; its eyes were not yet opened, and its neck seemed too weak to support the weight of its head. . . . The most singular thing of all was the direct purpose with which the blind little monster made for the open

side of the nest, the only part where it could throw its burthen down the bank. I think all the spectators felt the sort of horror and awe at the apparent inadequacy of the creature's intelligence to its acts that one might have felt at seeing a toothless hag raise a ghost by an incantation. It was horribly uncanny and gruesome!'

Another interesting and detailed account of the actions of a young cuckoo in a hedge-accentor's nest was recently given in the *Zoologist* by Mr. John Hancock, who watched the proceedings throughout. In the early morning of 28th June the nest contained the young cuckoo (which had been hatched the previous day), two young accentors, and two eggs. The cuckoo made its first attempt to put an egg out of the nest a few minutes after five o'clock by getting it on its back in a clumsy fashion, but it did not succeed in getting the egg high enough to roll it over the edge of the nest. At half-past ten it succeeded in putting it over the side in Mr. Hancock's presence. The cuckoo then fell back in the nest apparently exhausted, but in a very agitated state. For some time 'the two young accentors lay motionless at the bottom of the nest, while the cuckoo kept moving its wings like hands, as if to excite or stir up its companions into action. In about twenty-five minutes it made two desperate efforts to get one of the young accentors flung over the edge of the nest, but failed. Another unsuccessful struggle took place when the mother was on the edge of the nest. About eleven o'clock the first young accentor was put over the edge of the nest.' The second egg was put out at 1 P.M., and by 3.30 the other young accentor had followed, and the cuckoo was the sole occupant of the nest.

The number of the theories which have been put forward from time to time to account for the unusual habits of the cuckoo is legion. The instinct of the young bird is surprising enough in itself, but the disappearance of the parental feelings in the old bird, the habit of laying in the nests of other birds, the extraordinary variability of the eggs, and the undoubted existence of some connection between the appearance of the egg and the character of the nest in which it is placed appear to be quite as difficult to explain.

One of the theories respecting the cuckoo which has received general support is that the bird's parasitic habits are the natural result of the character of its food. This matter has an interesting aspect. Those who are familiar with the natural selection theories of Darwin, Wallace, and Lubbock will know that certain hairy caterpillars are supposed to have acquired their striking appearance as a protection from birds. Strange to say, however, it is

these caterpillars of the hairy kind, which other birds leave, which form the staple food of the cuckoo. The bird, by universal consent, is enormously greedy, and it devours great quantities of them. Now, it is pointed out that, as the supply of this food soon fails, the cuckoo is obliged to migrate so early that it would not have time to take upon itself the cares of maternity, and so it has acquired the convenient habit of placing its offspring out to nurse. Unfortunately, however, for this theory, there are several difficulties in the way of accepting it as it stands. The habit is said to be found in the Indian species, which do not migrate. The old birds leave us in July and August, but the young remain a month or six weeks longer; and if they can find food, why not the old birds?

Another theory which has its supporters is that the parasitic habit is the result of a peculiarity in the manner in which the cuckoo's eggs are laid. It is now well known that the bird does not deposit her eggs rapidly like most birds, but that an interval of four or five or even eight days intervenes between them. Hence it is said that the cuckoo evidently could not utilise a nest of her own, for the first eggs would be addled or hatched before the last were laid. There are difficulties in the way of this theory too. There are other birds who lay their eggs in the manner of the cuckoo, but without having acquired its parasitic habits. Irregularity in this respect exists doubtless to some extent in many kinds of birds, and in some to a considerable degree. Mr. Coues says of the American species (*Coccygus*) that the nests commonly contain young by the time the last egg is laid. The evidence would seem to suggest that this habit has been developed in the cuckoo rather as the result of its other habits than as the cause of them.

There is another theory which has received the adherence of many persons of weight. One of the strangest of many unusual facts regarding the cuckoo is the proportion of the sexes. The males greatly outnumber the females. The males have been estimated at ten to each female, and by some observers as high as fifteen to one; even the most moderate estimates do not place the proportion at less than five to one. The theorists who find in this fact the cause of the peculiar habits of the birds are, however, not agreed among themselves as to how it has operated. Some regard it as precluding the cuckoo from mating in the ordinary way, and so from building a nest and rearing her young. Others regard the temperament of the bird as a kind of physiological accompaniment of the relationship of the sexes, but on grounds which seem rather unsatisfactory, if not obscure.

There is no doubt that any satisfactory explanation of the unusual habits of the cuckoo must be sought for in the operation of natural selection. The great difficulty is, however, to find the key of the situation. Why has the cuckoo developed in a certain direction and become such an exception to other birds? Many of the peculiarities which observers have taken for causes are without doubt effects acquired after the bird had already made progress in a certain direction. But what has been the starting point, and where are we to find the cause which first led to the development of the bird along such a peculiar line?

The proper point at which to begin an inquiry of this nature would seem to be that to which all the theorists are willing to return. There can be no doubt that the cuckoo, like all parasites, at one time lived a respectable existence. The bird must at some time or other have built a nest and reared its own young. There are many recorded observations of the reversion of the bird at the present day to this long lost and aboriginal instinct of nidification. The cuckoo has been seen to sit on her own eggs on the ground, and she has been observed feeding her own young. It is even stated that she sometimes makes attempts at nest-building. Herr Adolph Müller has recently given an account of a case which he claims to have observed of a cuckoo hatching her own eggs. Comparing the cuckoo at the present day with other birds, nesting under normal conditions, we find the parasitic habit associated with three remarkable characteristics. There are: (1) the undoubted gluttony of the bird and the peculiarity of its food; (2) the great preponderance of males; and (3) the extraordinary habit of the young cuckoo in the nest. Any theory of the origin of the cuckoo's habits through natural selection should be able not only to account for the parasitic instinct, but to explain in what way these peculiarities are associated with this instinct and with each other.

The only other bird in which the cuckoo's habits are known to be developed to a considerable extent is the American cowbird. These birds exhibit in different degrees habits with regard to their eggs, varying from simple carelessness to the stage in which the parasitic habit is almost as well developed as in our own cuckoo. Some of the birds only show a disposition to lay their eggs carelessly about, occasionally dropping them in other birds' nests. In others the nest-building instinct has in great measure disappeared. The birds congregate together in flocks, they often lay their eggs in heaps, so that only a small proportion are hatched, and it is stated that the parents will assist indiscriminately in the task of hatching the eggs and feeding the young.

Lastly, in one species the cuckoo's habit is developed. A single egg is laid in the nests of other birds; the young stranger monopolises the attention of the foster-parent; and though it is said not to eject its fellow-nestlings, like the cuckoo, these generally come by their death in consequence of its presence. The one noteworthy peculiarity which the cow-bird is said to have besides in common with the cuckoo is its gluttony. The bird is generally spoken of as possessing an insatiable appetite.

Returning now to our own cuckoo, there is one peculiarity of the young bird which seems very significant. It appears open to question whether the true meaning of the habit of ejecting its fellows from the nest has not been overlooked by observers. That the young cuckoo could have acquired this habit, and even an anatomical structure suitable to it, merely in order to be able to turn out the weak and small fellow-nestlings with which it is usually associated seems hard to conceive. These would beyond doubt be either starved or smothered in any case (as the companions of the American cow-bird appear to be), and it seems hard to understand how natural selection could develop so deep-seated a change merely to obtain so small an advantage. The alternative conclusion is that the cuckoo must have developed this peculiarity under conditions different from those now existing.

We may be able to realise to some extent what the conditions must have been, under which the habit was at first developed, if we try to imagine for a moment what would happen if the cuckoo of the present day were to return to its aboriginal habits and endeavour to rear its own young. Two considerations immediately present themselves. A single pair would in the first place be quite unable to feed and rear an ordinary brood. In the second place, the young birds would not tolerate each other in the nest. There have been rare cases known where the cuckoo has deposited two eggs in the same nest, and one of the young birds has been known to eject the other after a prolonged struggle.

The cuckoo, whether from some change in environment, such as the disappearance of its natural food, or through some other cause, is evidently at the present time a bird which finds great difficulty in feeding itself. Each bird is said to have its own feeding grounds, which it defends against all comers, and the early migration, and the significant fact that the caterpillars which other birds reject form the staple food, all point to the conclusion that the cuckoo obtains sufficient food only with difficulty. Now it is not difficult to conceive what the effect

upon the young was when these conditions first arose and the cuckoo was still a normally nesting bird. The nesting period is the time when the demand for food is greatest, and the rivalry must immediately and in the first place have made itself felt among the young birds. The advantage must now have inevitably been with those birds which from generation to generation obtained the most food in the struggle which ever went on in the nest. This is where, in all probability, we must look for the origin at least in the young cuckoo of the habit of ejecting its fellows from the nest, and the development in the surviving birds, through the operation of natural selection, of the peculiar structure and temperament which accompanies it.

If we are right so far it is probable that we are now also in view of the explanation of the phenomenon of the great preponderance of males. It is a well-known fact that amongst most birds the males are always the stronger and more active in the nest. The advantage in such a struggle must always have been with the males, and the broods of which the greatest number survived were those of birds which produced the largest proportion of males. This selection may have continued after the cuckoo had acquired its parasitic habits. It would operate, it must be noticed, not simply by weeding out the females, but by selecting for survival the descendants of those cuckoos which produced a preponderance of males, and which would consequently transmit a similar tendency to their offspring. This tendency thus developed through an immense number of generations would inevitably become in course of time what we find it to be at the present day, the normal habit of the bird.

The origin of the parasitic habit of the cuckoo is less difficult to account for. We have here, in fact, only to follow in the main the explanation already suggested by Darwin, always remembering, however, that this habit is in itself probably but an incident in a peculiar course of development. The habit probably had its beginning in either one of two tendencies common among birds—viz., the inclination to steal from each other nest-building materials and the disposition to occasionally lay in each other's nests. Of the habit of stealing nest-building materials we have a familiar example in the rooks, and it is widely distributed among birds. The Baltimore oriole, a near relative of the American cow-bird, is described as being very active in appropriating materials collected by other birds. Some of the cow-birds either build a nest of their own or seize on one belonging to another bird, while in others, as already mentioned, the cuckoo's

habit is developed. On the other hand we have many familiar examples of the habit of occasionally laying in other nests, especially among the gallinaceous birds.

It is not difficult in either case to imagine how the present habit of the cuckoo was developed, doubtless by easy stages. If the cuckoo of the present day finds great difficulty in feeding itself during its stay with us, it was obviously a great advantage for the voracious young bird to be entrusted to the care of foster-parents. The young birds developing from eggs which chanced to be deposited in the nests of other birds, stood a much better chance of survival, and this chance was further increased when but a single egg was laid in each nest. From a small beginning the habit would, in fact, be developed and perfected by the operation of natural selection alone.

There remains to be mentioned what is perhaps the most interesting example of gradual adaptation of means to an end which the habits of the cuckoo afford. Many strange and ingenious theories, a few examples of which have been given, have been propounded to account for the instinct which apparently leads the cuckoo to deposit her eggs in nests containing others resembling them in appearance. As a matter of fact, however, we have here only another beautiful example of appropriate results produced by natural selection. The great variation in the cuckoo's eggs has been already referred to. Anyone who has ever placed, as I have done, a cuckoo's egg of the largest type in a nest with the eggs of one of the smaller birds utilised, could not help being struck with the incongruity of the appearance. There would be little doubt in his mind that if the cuckoo herself deposited her eggs thus unsuitably, they must often not be hatched out. That this happens sometimes at present is not unlikely; that it happened more often in the past there can be little doubt. Mr. Nuttall relates significant instances of the sagacity of the American summer-yellow bird in refusing to hatch the egg of the cow-bird placed among her own. The strange egg is sometimes broken, or, being too large for ejection, it is enclosed in the bottom of the nest and a new lining built over it, and the bird is even said to sometimes enclose with it in this manner her own eggs rather than hatch out that of the intruder. Some selection of this kind must undoubtedly have been going on in the case of the cuckoo's eggs for an immense period. The eggs which had most chance of being hatched out were doubtless always those most closely resembling the eggs of the foster-parent.

But now comes the most curious part. Natural selection it may be said has acted thus far, but how comes it that a particular cuckoo lays a certain type of egg in a particular nest? The answer is interesting. It has been noted by several observers that the same cuckoo lays eggs of the same type, and recent observations also establish a strong probability that each cuckoo generally lays in the nest of the same species of bird. Now both these peculiarities would in all probability be hereditary. The cuckoo, in fact, deposits her egg in a suitable nest, not from any extraordinary or mysterious instinct, but because the descendant of a bird reared, for instance, in a skylark's, from an egg resembling those of the foster-parent, would herself probably lay in a skylark's nest, and produce an egg of similar appearance. We appear to have here an exceedingly interesting state of things. Natural selection has, as it were, developed in individuals of the cuckoo tribe the tendency to produce certain varying types of eggs, and at one and the same time has also developed the tendency to deposit these eggs in the nest of the suitable species of bird. The great variation in size and appearance in the cuckoo eggs, therefore, simply roughly corresponds to the variation among the eggs of the numerous species of foster-parents made use of by the bird.

If the facts have justified us in regarding the cuckoo as a bird which experiences great difficulty in obtaining sufficient food, we appear to have, therefore, in the operation of natural selection alone, a sufficient explanation of the extraordinary series of habits and instincts which have rendered the bird remarkable from time immemorial. That the difficulty has been an increasing one from some distant time in the past the evidence seems to show; whether it still continues to increase, and whether we must regard the bird as travelling slowly on the down grade towards extinction, it would be more difficult to say. Some of the facts may appear to point to this conclusion. The wide distribution of the bird, the extraordinary limits which it reaches in its migrations (it is found from South Africa through the tropics, and as far north as the pines go in Europe), the short period over which its visits extend, the nature of its food, and the well-known gluttony and rivalry for the feeding-grounds are facts which, taken in connection with the parasitic habit, can at all events leave no doubt that the cuckoo of the present day maintains its position amid the competition of life only with extreme difficulty.

The Three Fates.¹

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD, AUTHOR OF 'MR. ISAACS,'
'DR. CLAUDIUS,' &c.

CHAPTER IV.

MANY days passed before George thought of renewing his visit to Washington Square, and during that time he was not even tempted to go and see Mrs. Trimm. If the truth were to be told, it might appear that the vision of the two young girls, which had kept George in company as he returned to his home, did not present itself again for a long time with any especial vividness. Possibly the surroundings and occupations in the midst of which he lived were not of a nature to stir his memories easily; possibly, too, and more probably, the first impression had lacked strength to fascinate his imagination for more than half an hour. The habit of reading a book, writing twenty lines of print about it and throwing it aside, never to be taken up again, may have its consequences in daily life. Though quite unconscious of taking such a superficial view of so serious a matter, George's mind treated the Misses Fearing very much as it would have treated a book that had been sent in for notice, dealt with and seen no more. Now and then, when he was not at work, and was even less interested than usual in his father's snatches of conversation, he was conscious of remembering his introduction to the two young ladies, and, strange to say, there was something humorous in the recollection. Totty's businesslike mode of procedure amused him, and what seemed to him her absurd assumption of a wild improbability. The ludicrous idea of the whole affair entertained his fancy for a few seconds before it slipped away again. He could not tell exactly where the source of his mirth was situated in the chain of ideas, but he almost smiled at the thought of the enormous, stiff easy-chairs, and of the bookcase in the corner,

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loaded to the highest shelf with histories bound in tree calf and gold. He remembered, too, the look of disappointment in Totty's eyes when he had alluded to the respectability of the furniture as they walked up Fifth Avenue.

Those thoughts did not altogether vanish without suggesting to George's inner sight the outlines of the girls' faces, and at the same time he had a faint memory of the sounds of their voices. It would not displease him to see and hear both again, but, on the other hand, a visit in the afternoon was an undertaking of some importance, a fact which cannot be realised by people who have spent their lives in society, and who go to see each other as a natural pastime, just as the solitary man takes up a book, or as the sailor who has nothing to do knots and splices odds and ends of rope. It is not only that the material preparations are irksome, and that it is a distinctly troublesome affair for the young literary drudge to make himself outwardly presentable; there is also the tiresome necessity of smoothing out the weary brain so that it may be capable of appreciating a set of unfamiliar impressions in which it anticipates no relaxation. Add to all this the leaven of shyness which so often belongs to young and sensitive natures, and the slight exertion necessary in such a case swells and rises till it seems to be an insurmountable barrier.

A day came, however, when George had nothing to do. It would be more accurate to say that on a particular afternoon, having finished one piece of work to his satisfaction, he did not feel inclined to begin another; for, among the many consequences of entering upon a literary life is the losing for ever of the feeling that at any moment there is nothing to be done. Let a writer work until his brain reels and his fingers can no longer hold the pen, he will nevertheless find it impossible to rest without imagining that he is being idle. He cannot escape from the devil that drives him, because he is himself the driver and the driven, the fiend and his victim, the torturer and the tortured. Let physicians rail at the horrible consequences of drink, of excessive smoking, of opium, of chloral, and of morphine—the most terrible of all stimulants is ink, the hardest of taskmasters, the most fascinating of enchanters, the breeder of the sweetest dreams and of the most appalling nightmares, the most insinuating of poisons, the surest of destroyers. One may truly venture to say that of an equal number of opium-eaters and professional writers, the opium-eaters have the best of it in the matter of long life, health, and peace of mind. We all hear of the

miserable end of the poor wretch who has subsisted for years upon stimulants or narcotics, and whose death, often at an advanced age, is held up as a warning to youth; but who ever knows or speaks of the countless deaths due solely to the over-use of pen, ink, and paper? Who catalogues the names of those many whose brains give way before their bodies are worn out? Who counts the suicides brought about by failure, the cases of men starving because they would rather write bad English than do good work of any other sort? In proportion to the whole literary profession of the modern world the deaths alone, without counting other accidents, are more numerous than those caused by alcohol among drinkers, by nicotine among smokers, and by morphine and like drugs among those who use them. For one man who succeeds in literature a thousand fail, and a hundred, who have looked upon the ink when it was black and cannot be warned from it, and whose nostrils have smelled the printer's sacrifice, are ruined for all usefulness and go drifting and struggling down the stream of failure till death or madness put an end to their sufferings. And yet no one ventures to call writing a destroying vice, nor to condemn poor scribblers as 'ink-drunkards.'

George walked the whole distance from his house to Washington Square. He had not been in that part of the city since he had come with his cousin to make his first visit, but as he drew near to his destination he began to regret that he allowed more than a fortnight to pass without making any attempt to see his new acquaintances. On reaching the house he found that Constance Fearing was at home. He was sorry not to see the younger sister, with whom he had found conversation more easy and sympathetic. On the other hand, the atmosphere of the house seemed less stiff and formal than on the first occasion; the disposition of the heavy furniture had been changed, there were flowers in the old-fashioned vases, and there were more books and small objects scattered upon the tables.

'I was afraid you were never coming again!' exclaimed the young girl, holding out her hand.

There was something simple and frank about her manner which put George at his ease.

'You are very kind,' he answered. 'I was afraid that even to-day might be too soon. But Sherry Trimm says that when he is in doubt he plays trumps—and so I came.'

'Not at all too soon,' suggested Constance.

'The calculation is very simple. A visit once a fortnight

would make twenty-six visits a year with a fraction more in leap year, would it not? Does not that appal you?’

‘I have not a mathematical mind, and I do not look so far ahead. Besides, if we are away for six months in the summer, you would not make so many.’

‘I forgot that everybody does not stay in town the whole year. I suppose you will go abroad again.’

‘Not this year,’ answered Miss Fearing rather sadly.

George glanced at her face and then looked quickly away. He understood her tone, and it seemed natural enough that the fresh recollection of her mother’s death should for some time prevent both the sisters from returning to Europe. He could not help wondering how much real sorrow lay behind the young girl’s sadness, though he was somewhat astonished to find himself engaged in such an odd psychological calculation. He did not readily believe evil of anyone, and yet he found it hard to believe much absolute good. Possibly he may have inherited something of this untrustfulness from his father, and there was a side in his own character which abhorred it. For a few moments there was silence between the two. George sitting in his upright chair and bending forward, gazing stupidly at his own hands clasped upon his knee, while Constance Fearing leaned far back in her deep easy-chair watching his dark profile against the bright light of the window.

‘Do you like people, Miss Fearing?’ George asked rather suddenly.

‘How do you mean?’

‘I mean, is your first impulse, about people you meet for the first time, to trust them, or not?’

‘That is not an easy question to answer. I do not think I have thought much about it. What is your own impulse?’

‘You are distrustful,’ said George in a tone of conviction.

‘Why?’

‘Because you answer a question by a question.’

‘Is that a sign? How careful one should be! No—I will try to answer fairly. I think I am unprejudiced, but I like to look at people’s faces before I make up my mind about them.’

‘And when you have decided, do you change easily? Have you not a decided first impression to which you come back in spite of your judgment, and in spite of yourself?’

‘I do not know. I fancy not. I think I would rather not have anything of the kind. Why do you ask?’

'Out of curiosity. I am not ashamed of being curious. Have you ever tried to think what the world would be like if nobody asked questions?'

'It would be a very quiet place.'

'We should all be asleep. Curiosity is only the waking state of the mind. We are all asking questions, all the time, either of ourselves, of our friends, or of our books. Nine-tenths of them are never answered, but that does not prevent us from asking more.'

'Or from repeating the same ones—to ourselves,' said Constance.

'Yes; the most interesting ones.'

'What is most interesting?'

'Always that which we hope the most and the least expect to have,' George answered. 'We are talking psychology or something very like it,' he added with a dry laugh.

'Is there any reason why we should not?' asked his companion. 'Why do you laugh, Mr. Wood? Your laugh does not sound very heartfelt either.' She fixed her clear blue eyes on him for a moment.

'One rarely does well what one has not practised before an audience,' he answered. 'As you suggest, there is no reason why we should not talk psychology—if we know enough about it—that is to say, if you do, for I am sure I do not. There is no subject on which it is so easy to make smart remarks.'

'Excepting our neighbours,' observed Constance.

'I have no neighbours. Who is my neighbour?' asked George rather viciously.

'I think there is a biblical answer to that question.'

'But I do not live in biblical times; and I suppose my scratches are too insignificant to attract the attention of any passing Samaritan.'

'Perhaps you have none at all.'

'Perhaps not. I suppose our neighbours are "them that we love that love us," so the old toast says. Are they not?'

'And those whom we ought to love, I fancy,' suggested Constance.

'But we ought to love our enemies. What a neighbourly world it is, and how full of love it should be!'

'Fortunately, "love" is a vague word.'

'Have you never tried to define it?' asked the young man.

'I am not clever enough for that. Perhaps you could.'

George looked quickly at the young girl. He was not prepared to believe that she made the suggestion out of coquetry, but he was not old enough to understand that such a remark might have escaped from her lips without the slightest intention.

'I rather think that definition ends when love begins,' he said, after a moment's pause. 'All love is experimental, and definition is generally the result of many experiments.'

'Experimental?'

'Yes. Do you not know many cases in which people have tried the experiment and have failed? It is no less an experiment if it happen to succeed. Affection is a matter of fact, but love is a matter of speculation.'

'I should not think that experimental love would be worth much,' said Constance, with a shade of embarrassment. A very faint colour rose in her cheeks as she spoke.

'One should have tried it before one should judge. Or else, one should begin at the other extremity and work backwards from hate to love, through the circle of one's acquaintances.'

'Why are you always alluding to hating people?' asked the young girl, turning her eyes upon him with a look of gentle, surprised protest. 'Is it for the sake of seeming cynical, or for the sake of making paradoxes? It is not really possible that you should hate everyone, you know.'

'With a few brilliant exceptions, you are quite right,' George answered. 'But I was hoping to discover that you hated some one, for the sake of observing your symptoms. You look so very good.'

It would have been hard to say that the expression of his face had changed, but as he made the last remark the lines that naturally gave his mouth a scornful look were unusually apparent. The colour appeared again in Constance's cheeks, a little brighter than before, and her eyes glistened as she looked away from her visitor.

'I think you might find that appearances are deceptive if you go on,' she said.

'Should I?' asked George quietly, his features relaxing in a singularly attractive smile which was rarely seen upon his face. He was conscious of a thrill of intense satisfaction at the manifestation of the young girl's sensitiveness, a satisfaction which he could not then explain, but which was in reality highly artistic. The sensation could only be compared to that produced in an

appreciative ear by a new and perfectly harmonious modulation sounded upon a very beautiful instrument.

'I wonder,' he resumed presently, 'what form the opposite of goodness would take in you? Are you ever very angry? Perhaps it is rude to ask such questions. Is it?'

'I do not know. No one was ever rude to me,' Constance answered calmly. 'But I have been angry—since you ask—I often am, about little things.'

'And are you very fierce and terrible on those occasions?'

'Very terrible indeed,' laughed the young girl. 'I should frighten you if you were to see me.'

'I can well believe that. I am of a timid disposition.'

'Are you? You do not look like it. I shall ask Mrs. Trimm if it is true. By-the-bye, have you seen her to-day?'

'Not since we were here together.'

'I thought you saw her very often. I had a note from her yesterday. I suppose you know?'

'I know nothing. What is it?'

'Old Mr. Craik is very ill—dying, they say. She wrote to tell me so, explaining why she had not been here.'

George's eyes suddenly gleamed with a disagreeable light. The news was as unexpected as it was agreeable. Not, indeed, that George could ever hope to profit in any way by the old man's death; for he was naturally so generous that, if such a prospect had existed, he would have been the last to rejoice in its realisation. He hated Thomas Craik with an honest and disinterested hatred, and the idea the world was to be rid of him at last was inexpressibly delightful.

'He is dying, is he?' he asked in a constrained voice.

'You seem glad to hear it,' said Constance, looking at him with some curiosity.

'I? Yes—well, I am not exactly sorry!' His laugh was harsh and unreal. 'You could hardly expect me to shed tears—that is, if you know anything of my father's misfortunes.'

'Yes, I have heard something. But I am sorry that I was the person to give you the news.'

'Why, I am grateful to you.'

'I know you are, and that is precisely what I do not like. I do not expect you to be grieved, but I do not like to see one man so elated over the news of another man's danger.'

'Why not say, his death?' exclaimed George.

Constance was silent for a moment, and then looked at him as she spoke.

'I hardly know you, Mr. Wood. This is only the second time I have seen you, and I have no right to make remarks about your character. But I cannot help thinking—that——'

She hesitated, not as though from any embarrassment, but as if she could not find the words she wanted. George made no attempt to help her, though he knew perfectly well what she wanted to say. He waited coldly to see whether she could complete her sentence.

'You ought not to think such things,' she said suddenly; 'and if you do, you ought not to show it.'

'In other words, you wish me to reform either my character or my manners, or both. Do you know that old Tom Craik ruined my father? Do you know that after he had done that he let my father's reputation suffer, though my father was as honest as the daylight and he himself was the thief? That sounds very dramatic and theatrical, does it not? It is all very true nevertheless. And yet, you expect me to be such a clever actor as not to show my satisfaction at your news. All I can say, Miss Fearing, is that you expect a great deal of human nature, and that I am very sorry to be the particular individual who is fated to disappoint your expectations.'

'Of course you feel strongly about it—I did not know all you have just told me, or I would not have spoken. I wish everyone could forgive—it is so right to forgive.'

'Yes—undoubtedly,' assented George. 'Begin by forgiving me, please, and then tell me what is the matter with the worthy Mr. Craik.'

'Mrs. Trimm seems to think it is nervous prostration—what everybody has nowadays.'

'Is she very much cut up?' George asked with an air of concern.

'She writes that she does not leave him.'

'Nor will—until——' George stopped short.

'What were you going to say?'

'I was going to make a remark about the human will in general and about the wills of dying men in particular. It was very ill-natured, and in direct contradiction to your orders.'

'I suppose she will have all his fortune in any case,' observed Constance, repressing a smile, as though she felt that it would not suit the tone she had taken before.

'Since you make so worldly an inquiry, I presume we may take it for granted that the mantle of Mr. Craik's filthy lucre will descend upon the unwilling shoulders of Mrs. Sherrington Trimm. To be plain, Totty will get the dollars. Well—I wish her joy. She is not acquainted with poverty as it is, nor was destitution ever her familiar friend.'

'Why do you affect that biblical sort of language?'

'It seems to me more forcible than swearing. Besides, you would not let me swear, I am sure, even if I wanted to.'

'Certainly not——'

'Very well, then you must forgive the imperfections of my style in consideration of my not doing very much worse. I think I will go and ask how Mr. Craik is doing to-day. Would not that show a proper spirit of charity and forgiveness?'

'I hope you will do nothing of the sort!' exclaimed Constance hastily.

'Would it not be a proof that I had profited by your instruction?'

'I think it would be very hypocritical, and not at all nice.'

'Do you? It seems to me that it would only look civil——'

'From what you told me, civility can hardly be expected from you in this case.'

'I am not obliged to tell the servant at the door the motive of my curiosity when I inquire after the health of a dying relation. That would be asking too much.'

'You can inquire just as well at Mrs. Trimm's——'

'Mr. Craik's house is on my way home from here—Totty's is not on the direct line.'

'I hope you—how absurd of me though! It is no business of mine.'

George could not say anything in reply to this statement, but an expression of amusement came over his face which did not escape his companion. Constance laughed a little nervously.

'You are obliged to admit that it is nothing of my business, you see,' she said.

'I am in the position of a man who cannot assent without being rude, nor differ without impugning the known truth.'

'That was very well done, Mr. Wood,' said Constance. 'I have nothing more to say.'

'To me? Then I herewith most humbly take my leave.' George rose from his seat.

'I did not mean that!' exclaimed the young girl with a smile. 'Do not go——'

'It is growing late, and Mr. Craik may be gathered to his fathers before I can ring at his door and ask how he is.'

'Oh, please do not talk any more about that poor man!'

'If I stay here I shall. May I come again some day, Miss Fearing? You bear me no malice for being afflicted with so much original sin?'

'Its originality almost makes it pardonable. Come whenever you please. We shall always be glad to see you, and I hope that my sister will be here the next time.'

George vaguely hoped that she would not as he bowed and left the room. He had enjoyed the visit far more than Constance had, for whereas his conversation had somewhat disquieted her sensitive feeling of fitness, hers had afforded him a series of novel and delightful sensations. He was conscious of a new interest, of a new train of thought, and especially of an odd and inexplicable sense of physical comfort that seemed to proceed from the region of the heart, as though his body had been cheered, his blood warmed, and his circulation stimulated by the assimilation of many good things. As he walked up the Avenue, he did not ask himself whether he had produced a good or a bad impression upon Miss Fearing, nor whether he had talked well or ill, still less whether the young girl had liked him, though it is probable that if he had put any of these questions to his inner consciousness that complacent witness would, in his present mood, have answered all his inquiries in the way most satisfactory to his vanity. For some reason or other he was not curious to know what his inner consciousness thought of the matter. For the moment sensation was enough, and he was surprised to discover that sensation could be so agreeable. He knew that he was holding his head higher than usual, that his glance was more confident than it was wont to be, and his step more elastic, but he did not connect any of these phenomena in a direct way with his visit in Washington Square. Perhaps there was a vague notion afloat in his brain to the effect that if he once allowed the connection he should be forced into calling himself a fool, and that it was consequently far wiser to enjoy the state in which he found himself than to inquire too closely into its immediate or remote causes.

It is also probable that if George Wood's condition of general satisfaction on that evening had been more clearly dependent upon his recollection of the young lady he had just left, he would

have felt an impulse to please her by doing as she wished ; in other words, he would have gone home or would have passed by Totty's house to make inquiries, instead of executing his purpose of ringing at Mr. Craik's door. But there was something contradictory in his nature, which drove him to do the very things which most men would have left undone ; and, moreover, there was a grain of grim humour in the idea of asking in person after Tom Craik's health which made the plan irresistibly attractive. He imagined his own expression when he should tell his father what he had done, and he knew the old gentleman well enough to guess that the satire of the proceeding would inwardly please him in spite of himself, though he would certainly look grave and shake his head when he heard the story.

Constance Fearing's meditations, when she was left alone, were of a very different character. She stood for a long time at the window looking out into the purple haze that hung about the square, and then she turned and went and sat before the fire, and gazed at the glowing coals. George Wood could not but have felt flattered had he known that he was the subject of her thoughts during the greater part of an hour after his departure, and he would have been very much surprised at his own ignorance of human nature had he guessed that her mind was disturbed by the remembrance of her own conduct. He would assuredly have called her morbid and have doubted the sincerity of her most sacred convictions, and if he could have looked into her mind, that part of his history which was destined to be connected with hers would in all likelihood have remained unenacted. He could certainly not have understood her mood at that time, and the attempt to do so would have filled him with most unreasonable prejudices against her.

To the young girl it seemed indeed a very serious matter to have criticised George's conduct and to have thrust her advice upon him. It was the first time she had ever done such a thing, and she wondered at her own boldness. She repeated to herself that it was none of her business to consider what George Wood did, and still less to sit in judgment upon his thoughts, and yet she was glad that she had spoken as she had. She knew very little about men, and she was willing to believe they might all think alike. At all events, this particular man had very good cause for resentment against Thomas Craik. Nevertheless there was something in his evident delight at the prospect of the old man's death that was revolting to her finest feelings. Absolutel-

ignorant of the world's real evil, she saw her own path beset with imaginary sins of the most varied description, to avoid committing which needed the constant wakefulness of a delicate sensibility; and as she knew of no greater or more real evils, she fancied that the lives of others must be like her own—a labyrinth of transparent cobwebs, to brush against one of which, even inadvertently, was but a little removed from crime itself. Her education had been so strongly influenced by religion and her natural sensitiveness was so great, that the main object of life presented itself to her as the necessity for discovering an absolute right or wrong in the most minute action, and the least relaxation of this constant watch appeared to her to be indicative of moral sloth. The fact that, with such a disposition she was not an intolerable nuisance to all who knew her, was due to her innate tact and good taste, and in some measure to her youth, which lent its freshness and innocence to all she did and thought and said. At the present time her conscience seemed to be more than usually active and dissatisfied. She assuredly did not believe that it was her mission to reform George Wood, or to decorate his somewhat peculiar character with religious arabesques of faith, hope, and charity; but it is equally certain that she felt an unaccountable interest in his conduct, and a degree of curiosity in his actions which, considering how slightly she knew him, was little short of amazing. Had she been an older woman, less religious and more aware of her own instincts, she would have asked herself whether she was not already beginning to care for George Wood himself rather than for the blameless rectitude of her own moral feelings. But with her the refinements of a girlish religiousness had so far got the upper hand of everything else that she attributed her uneasiness to the doubt about her own conduct rather than to a secret attraction which was even then beginning to exercise its influence over her.

It was to be foreseen that Constance Fearing would not fall in love easily, even under the most favourable circumstances. The most innocent love in the world often finds a barrier in the species of religious sentimentality by which she was at that time dominated, for morbid scruples have power to kill spontaneity and all that is spontaneous, among which things love is first, or should be. Constance was not like her sister Grace, who had loved John Bond ever since they had been children, and who meant to marry him as soon as possible. Her colder temperament would lose time in calculating for the future instead of

allowing her to be happy in the present. Deep in her heart, too, there lay a seed of unhappiness, the habit of doubting, which had grown out of her mistrust of her own motives. She was very rich. Should a poor suitor present himself, could she help fearing lest he loved her money, when she could hardly find faith in herself for the integrity of her own most trivial intentions? She never thought of Grace without admiring her absolute trust in the man she loved.

CHAPTER V.

THOMAS CRAIK lay ill in his great house, listening for the failing beatings of his heart as the last glow of the February afternoon faded out of the curtains and withdrew its rich colour from the carved panels on the walls. He lay upon his pillows, an emaciated old man with a waxen face and head, sunken eyes that seemed to have no sight in them. Short locks of yellowish-grey hair strayed about his forehead and temples, like dry grasses scattered over a skull. There was no beard upon his face, and the hard old lips were tightly drawn in a set expression, a little apart, so that the black shadow of the open mouth was visible between them. The long nervous hands lay upon the counterpane together, the fingers of the one upon the wrist of the other feeling the sinking pulse, searching with their numbed extremities for a little flutter of motion in the dry veins. Thomas Craik lay motionless in his bed, not one outward sign betraying the tremendous conflict that was taking place in his still active brain. He was himself to the last, such as he had always been in the great moments of his life, apparently cool and collected, in reality filled with the struggle of strong opposing passions.

He was not alone. Two physicians were standing in silence, side by side, before the chimney-piece, beneath which a soft fire of dry wood was burning steadily with a low and unvarying musical roar. An attendant sat upright upon a carved chair at the foot of the bed, not taking his eyes from the sick man's face.

The room was large and magnificent in its furniture and appointments. The high wainscot had been carved in rare woods after the designs of a great French artist. The walls above were covered with matchless Cordova leather from an Italian palace. The ceiling was composed of rich panels that surrounded a broad

canvas from the hand of a famous Spanish master, dead long ago. The chimney-piece was enriched with old brass work from Cairo, and with exquisite tiles from Turkish mosques. Priceless Eastern carpets, of which not one was younger than the century, covered the inlaid wooden floor. Diana of Poitiers had slept beneath the canopy of the princely bedstead; it was said that Lewis the Fourteenth had eaten off the table that was placed beside it, and Benvenuto Cellini had carved the silver bell which stood within reach of the patient's hand. There was incongruity in the assemblage of different objects, but the great value of each and all saved the effect from vulgarity, and lent to the whole something of the odd harmony peculiar to certain collections.

It was the opinion of the two doctors that Tom Craik was dying. They had done what they could for him and were waiting for the end. As to his malady, it was sufficiently clear to both of them that his vitality was exhausted, and that even if he survived this crisis he could not have long to live. They agreed that the action of the heart had been much impaired by a life of constant excitement, and that the nerves had lost their elasticity. They had taken pains to explain to his sister, Mrs. Sherrington Trimm, that there was very little to be done and that the patient should be advised to make his last dispositions, since a little fatigue more or less could make no material difference in his state, whereas he would probably die more easily if his mind were free from anxiety. Totty had spent the day in the house and intended to return in the evening. She bore up very well under the trial, and the physicians felt obliged to restrain her constant activity in tending her brother while she was in the room, as it seemed to make him nervous and irritable. She had their fullest sympathy, of course, as persons who are supposed to be sole legatees of the dying very generally have; but, so far as their professional capacity was concerned, the two felt that it went better with the patient when his faithful sister was out of the house.

From time to time inquiries were made on the part of acquaintances, generally through their servants, but they were not many. Though the other persons in the room scarcely heard the distant ringing of the muffled bell and the careful opening and shutting of the street door, the feeble old man never failed to catch the sound of both, and either with his eyes or half-uttered words asked who had called. On receiving the answer he generally moved his head a little wearily and his lids drooped again.

'Is there anybody you expect? Anybody you wish to see?'

one of the physicians once asked, bending low and speaking softly. He suspected that something was disquieting the dying man's mind.

But there was no answer, and the lids dropped again. It was now dusk and it would soon be night. Many hours might pass before the end came, and the doctors consulted in low tones as to which of them should remain. Just then the faint and distant rattle of the bell was heard. Immediately Tom Craik stirred, and seemed to be listening attentively. The two men ceased speaking, and they could hear the front door softly open in the street below, and close again a few seconds later. One of the physicians glanced at the patient, saw the usual look of inquiry in his face and quickly left the room. When he returned he held a card in his hand, which he took to the bedside after looking at it by the fireside. Bending down, he spoke in a low tone :

'Mr. George Winton Wood has called,' he said.

Tom Craik's sunken eyes opened suddenly and fixed themselves on the speaker's face.

'Any message?' he asked very feebly.

'He said he had only just heard of your illness, and was very sorry—would call again.'

A strange look of satisfaction came into the old man's colourless face, and a low sigh escaped his lips as he closed his eyes again.

'Would you like to see him?' inquired the doctor.

The patient shook his head without raising his lids, and the room was still once more. Presently the other physician departed, and the one who was left installed himself in a comfortable chair from which he could see the bed and the door. During half an hour no sound was heard save the muffled roar of the wood fire. At last the sick man stirred again.

'Doctor—come here,' he said in a harsh whisper.

'What is it, Mr. Craik?'

'Send for Trimm at once.'

'Mrs. Trimm, did you say?'

'No—Sherry Trimm himself—make my will—see? Quick.'

The physician stared at his patient for a moment in very considerable surprise, for he thought he had reason to suppose that Thomas Craik's will had been made already, and now he half suspected that the old man's mind was wandering. He hesitated.

'You think I'm not able, do you?' asked Craik, his rough

whisper rising to a growl. 'Well, I am. I'm not dead yet, so get him quickly.'

The doctor left the room without further delay, to give the necessary orders. When he returned, Mr. Craik was lying with his eyes wide open, staring at the fire.

'Give me something, can't you?' he said with more energy than he had shown that day.

The doctor began to think that it was not yet all up with his patient, as he mixed something in a glass and gave it to him. Craik drank eagerly and moved his stiffened lips afterwards as though he had enjoyed the taste of the drink.

'I may not jockey the undertaker,' he grumbled, 'but I shall last till morning, anyhow.'

Nearly half an hour elapsed before Sherrington Trimm reached the house, but during all that time Thomas Craik did not close his eyes again. His face looked less waxen too, and his sight seemed to have recovered some of the light that had been fading out of it by degrees all day. The doctor watched him with interest, wondering, as doctors must often wonder, what was passing in his brain, what last, unspent remnant of life's passions had caused so sudden a revival of his energy, and whether this manifestation of strength were the last flare of the dying lamp, or whether Tom Craik, to use his own words, would jockey the undertaker, as he had jockeyed many another adversary in his stirring existence.

The door opened, and Sherrington Trimm entered the room. He was a short, active man, slightly inclined to be stout, bald and very full about the chin and neck, with sharp, movable blue eyes, and a closely cut, grizzled moustache. His hands were plump, white and pointed, his feet were diminutive and his dress was irreproachable. He had a habit of turning his head quickly to the right and left when he spoke, as though challenging contradiction. He came briskly to the bedside and took one of Craik's wasted hands in his, with a look of honest sympathy.

'How are you, Tom?' he inquired, suppressing his cheerful voice to a sort of subdued chirp.

'According to him,' growled Craik, glancing at the doctor, 'I believe I died this afternoon. However, I want to make my will, so get out your tools, Sherry, and set to. Please leave us alone,' he added, looking up at the physician.

The latter went out, taking the attendant with him.

'Your will!' exclaimed Sherry Trimm when the door had closed behind the two. 'I thought——'

'Bad habit, thinking things. Don't. Put that drink where I can reach it—so. There's paper on the table. Sit down.'

Trimm saw that he had better not argue the matter, and he did as he was bidden. He was, indeed, very much surprised at the sudden turn of affairs, for he was perfectly well aware that Tom Craik had made a will some years previously, in which he left his whole fortune to his only sister, Trimm's wife. The lawyer wondered what his brother-in-law intended to do now, and as the only means of ascertaining the truth seemed to be to obey his orders, he lost no time in preparing to receive the dictation.

"This is the last will and testament of me, Thomas Craik," said the sick man sharply. 'Got that? Go on. "I do hereby revoke and annul all former wills made by me." That's correct, isn't it? No, I'm not wandering—not a bit. Very important that clause—very. Go ahead about the just debts and funeral expenses. I needn't dictate that.'

Trimm wrote rapidly on, nervously anxious to get to the point.

'Got that? Well, "I bequeath all my worldly possessions, real and personal estate of all kinds"—go on with the stock phrases—include house and furniture, trinkets and everything.'

Trimm's hand moved quickly along the ruled lines of the foolscap.

'To whom?' he asked, almost breathlessly, as he reached the end of the formal phrase.

"To George Winton Wood," said Craik, with an odd snap of the lips. 'His name's on that card, Sherry, beside you, if you don't know how to spell it. Go on. "Son of Jonah Wood, of New York, and of Fanny Winton, deceased, also of New York." No mistake about the identity, eh? Got it down? "To have and to hold"—and all the rest of it. Let's get to the signature—look sharp! Get in the witness clause right—that's the most important—don't forget to say, "In our presence and in the presence of each other"—there's where the hitch comes in about proving wills. All right. Ring for the doctor, and we'll have the witnesses right away. Make the date clear.'

Sherrington Trimm had not recovered from his surprise as he pressed the silver button of the bell. The physician entered immediately.

'Can you be the other witness yourself, Sherry? Rather

not? Doctor, just send for Stubbs, will you, please? He'll do, won't he?'

Trimm nodded, while he and the physician set a small invalid's table upon the sick man's knees, and spread upon it the will, of which the ink was not yet dry. Trimm dipped the pen in the ink and handed it to Mr. Craik.

'Let me drink first,' said the latter. He swallowed the small draught eagerly, and then looked about him.

'Will you sign?' asked Trimm, nervously.

'Is Stubbs here? Wait for him. Here, Stubbs—you see—this is my will. I'm going to sign it, and you're a witness.'

'Yes, sir,' said the butler gravely. He moved forward cautiously, so that he could see the document and recognise it if he should ever be called upon to do so.

The sick man steadied himself while the doctor thrust his arm behind the pillows to give him more support. Then he set the pen to the paper and traced his name in large clear characters. He did not take his eyes from the paper until the doctor and the servant had signed as witnesses. Then his head fell back on the pillows.

'Take that thing away, Sherry, and keep it,' he said feebly, for the strength had gone out of him all at once. 'You may want it to-morrow—or you may not.'

Mechanically he laid his fingers on his own pulse, and then lay quite still. Sherrington Trimm looked at the doctor with an expression of inquiry, but the latter only shrugged his shoulders and turned away. After such a manifestation of energy as he had just seen he felt that it was impossible to foresee what would happen. Tom Craik's nerves might weather the strain after all, and he might recover. Mr. Trimm folded the document neatly, wrapped it in a second sheet of paper, and put it into his pocket. Then he prepared to take his leave. He touched the sick man's hand gently.

'Good-night, Tom,' he said, bending over his brother-in-law. 'I will call in the morning and ask how you are.'

Craik opened his eyes.

'Tell nobody what I have done till I'm dead,' he answered in a whisper. 'Good-night.'

Mr. Trimm felt no inclination to divulge the contents of the will. He was a very shrewd and keen man, who could certainly not be accused of having ever neglected his own interest; but he was also scrupulously honest, not only with that professional

honesty which is both politic and lucrative, but in all his thoughts and reasonings with himself. At the present moment his position was not an agreeable one. It is true that neither he nor his wife was in need of Craik's money, for they had plenty of their own; but it is equally certain that during several years past they had confidently expected to inherit the old man's fortune if he died before them. Trimm had himself drawn up the will by which his wife was made the heir to almost everything Craik possessed. There had been a handsome legacy provided for this same George Winton Wood, but all the rest was to have been Totty's. And now Trimm had seen the whole aspect of the future changed by a stroke of the pen, apparently during the last minutes of the old man's life. He knew that the testator was in full possession of his senses, and that the document was as valid as any will could be. Conscientious as he was, if he had believed that Craik was no longer sane he would have been quite ready to take advantage of the circumstance, and would have lost no time in consulting the physician with a view to obtaining evidence in the case that would arise. But it was evident that Craik's mind was in no way affected by his illness. The thing was done, and if Craik died it was irrevocable. Sherry and Totty Trimm would never live in the magnificent house of which they had so often talked.

'Not even the house!' he whispered to himself as he went down stairs. 'Not even the house!'

For a legacy he would not have cared. A few thousands were no object to him, and he was unlike his wife in that he did not care for money itself. The whole fortune, or half of it, added to what the couple already had, would have made in their lives the difference between luxury and splendour; the possession of the house alone, with what it contained, would have given them the keenest pleasure; but in Trimm's opinion a paltry legacy of ten thousand dollars or so would not have been worth the trouble of taking. Of course, it was possible that Tom Craik might recover, and make a third will. Trimm knew by experience that a man who will once change his mind completely, may change it a dozen times if he have time. But Craik was very ill, and there seemed little likelihood of his ever getting upon his legs again.

Trimm had known much of his brother-in-law's affairs during the last twenty years, and he was far less surprised at the way in which he had now finally wound them up, before taking his departure from life, than most people would have been. He knew better than anyone that Craik was not so utterly bad-hearted as

he was generally believed to be, and he knew that as the man grew older he felt twinges of remorse when he thought of Jonah Wood. That he cordially detested the latter was not altogether astonishing, since he had so greatly injured him; but the natural contrariety of his nature forced him into an illogical situation. He hated Wood, and yet he desired to make him some sort of restitution, not, indeed, out of principle or respect for any law, human or divine, but as a means of pacifying his half-nervous, half-superstitious conscience. He could not have done anything openly in the matter, for that would have been equivalent to acknowledging the unwritten debt; so that the only way out of his difficulty lay in the disposal of his fortune after his death. But, although he suffered something very like remorse, he hated Jonah Wood too thoroughly to insert his name in his will. There was nothing to be done but to leave money to George. It had seemed to him that a legacy of a hundred thousand dollars would be enough to procure his own peace of mind, and having once made that arrangement he had dismissed the subject.

But as he lay in this illness, which he believed was to be his last, a further change had taken place in his view of the matter. He was naturally suspicious as well as shrewd, and the extreme anxiety displayed by his sister had attracted his attention. They had always lived on excellent terms, and Totty was distinctly a woman of demonstrative temperament. It was assuredly not surprising that she should show much feeling for her brother and spend much time in taking care of him. It was quite right that she should be at his bedside in moments of danger, and that she should besiege the doctors with questions about Tom's chances of recovery. But in Tom's opinion there was a false note in her good behaviour and a false ring in her voice. There was something strained, something not quite natural, something he could hardly define, but which roused all the powers of opposition for which he had been famous throughout his life. It was a peculiarity of his malady that his mental faculties were wholly unimpaired, and were, if anything, sharpened by his bodily sufferings and by his anxiety about his own state. The consequence was that, as soon as the doubt about Totty's sincerity had entered his mind, he had concentrated his attention upon it, had studied it, and had applied himself to accounting for her minutest actions and most careless words upon the theory that she was playing a part. In less than twenty-four hours the suspicion had become a conviction, and Craik felt sure that Totty was overdoing her show

of sisterly affection in order to hide her delight at the prospect of her brother's death. It is not too unjust to say that there was a proportion of truth in Mr. Craik's suppositions, and that Mrs. Sherrington Trimm's perturbation of spirit did not result so much from the dread of a great sorrow as from the prospect of a very great satisfaction when that sorrow should have spent itself. She was not in the least ashamed of her heartlessness, either. Was she not doing everything in her power to soothe her brother's last days, sacrificing to his comfort the last taste of gaiety she could enjoy until the mourning for him should be over, submitting to a derangement of her comfortable existence which was nothing short of distracting? It was not her fault if Tom had not one of those lovable natures whose departure from this life leaves a great void in the place where they have dwelt.

But from being convinced that Totty cared only for the money to the act of depriving her of it was a long distance for the old man's mind to pass over. He was just enough to admit that in a similar position he would have felt very much as she did, though he would certainly have acted his part more skilfully and with less theatrical exaggeration. After all, money was a very good thing, and a very desirable thing, as Thomas Craik knew better than most people. After all, too, Totty was his sister, his nearest relation, the only one of his connections with whom he had not quarrelled at one time or another. The world would think it very natural that she should have everything, and there was no reason why she should not, unless her anxiety to get it could be called one. He considered the case in all its bearings. If, for instance, that young fellow, George Wood, whom he had not seen since he had been a boy, were to be put in Totty's place, what would he feel, and what would he do? He would undoubtedly wish that Tom Craik might die speedily, and his eyes would assuredly gleam when he thought of moving into the gorgeous house a month after the funeral. That was only human nature—simple, unadorned, everyday human nature. But the boy supposed that he had no chance of getting anything, and did not even think it worth while to ring at the door and ask the news of his dying relation. Of course not; why should he? And yet, thought the sour old man, if George Wood could guess how near he was to being made a millionaire, how nimbly his feet would move in the appropriate direction, with what alacrity he would ring the bell, with what an accent of subdued sympathy he would question the servant! Truly, if by any chance he should take it into his head to make inquiries,

there would be an instance of disinterested good feeling indeed. He would never do that. Why, then, should the money be given to him rather than to Totty?

But the idea had taken possession of the old man's active brain, and would not be chased away. As he thought about it, too, it seemed as though he might die more easily if such full restitution were made. No one could tell anything about the future state of existence. Thomas Craik was no atheist, though he had never found time or inclination to look into the question of religion, and certain peculiarities in his past conduct had made any such meditations particularly distasteful to him. When once the end had come the money could be of no use to him, and if George Wood had it, Thomas Craik might stand a better chance in the next world. Totty had received her share of the gain, too, and had no claim to any more of it. He had managed her business with his own, and had enriched her while enriching himself with what had belonged to Jonah Wood and to a great number of other people. At all events, if he left everything to George no one could accuse him hereafter—whatever that might mean—with not having done all he could to repair the wrong. He said to himself, philosophically, that one of two things must happen: either he was to die, and in that case he would do well to die with as clear a conscience as he could buy; or he was to recover, and would then have plenty of time to reflect upon his course without having deprived himself of what he liked.

At last, between the two paths that were open to him, he became confused, and with characteristic coolness he determined to leave the matter to chance. If George Wood showed enough interest in him to come to the door and make inquiries, he would change his will. If the young fellow did not show himself, Totty should have the fortune.

'That's what I call giving Providence a perfectly fair chance,' he said to himself. A few hours after he had reached this conclusion George actually came to the house.

Then Tom Craik hesitated no longer. The whole thing was done and conclusively settled without loss of time, as Craik had always loved to do business.

It is probable that if George had guessed the importance of the simple act of asking after his relation's condition he would have gone home without passing the door, and would have spent so much time in reflecting upon his course that it would have been too late to do anything in the matter. The problem would

not have been an easy one to solve, involving as it did a question of honesty in motive on the one hand, and a consideration of true justice on the other. If any one had asked him for his advice in a similar case, he would have answered, with a dry laugh, that a man should never neglect his opportunities, that no one would be injured by the transaction, and that the money belonged by right to the family of the man from whom it had been unjustly taken. But though George could affect a cynically practical business tone in talking of other people's affairs, he was not capable of acting upon such principles in his own case. To extract profit of any sort from what was nothing short of hypocrisy would have been impossible to him.

He had been unable to resist the temptation of asking the news, because he sincerely hoped that the old man was about to draw his last breath, and because there seemed to him to be something attractively ironical in the action. He even expected that Mr. Craik would understand that the inquiry was made from motives of hatred rather than of sympathy, and imagined with pleasure that the thought might inflict a sting and embitter his last moments. There was nothing contrary to George's feelings in that, though he would have flushed with shame at the idea that he was to be misunderstood, and that what was intended for an insult was to be rewarded with a splendid fortune.

Very possibly, too, there was a feeling of opposition concerned in his act, for which he himself could not have accounted. He was not fond of advice, and Constance Fearing had seemed very anxious that he should not do what he had done. Being still very young, it seemed absurd to him that a young girl whom he scarcely knew, and had only seen twice, should interfere with his free-will.

This contrariety was wholly unreasoning, and if he had tried to understand it he would have failed in the attempt. He would certainly not have attributed it to the beginning of a serious affection, for he was not old enough to know how often love's early growth is hidden by what we take wrongly for an antagonism of feeling.

However all these things may be explained, George Wood felt that he was in a humour quite new to him when he rang at Tom Craik's door. He was elated without knowing why, and yet he was full of viciously combative instincts. His heart beat with a pleasant alacrity, and his mind was unusually clear. He would have said that he was happy, and yet his happiness was by no

means of the kind which makes men at peace with their surroundings or gentle toward those with whom they have to do. There was something overbearing in it, that agreed with his natural temper, and that found satisfaction in what was meant for an act of unkindness.

He found his father reading before the fire. The old gentleman read, as he did everything else, with the air of a man who is performing a serious duty. He sat in a high-backed chair with wooden arms, his glasses carefully adjusted upon his nose, his head held high, his lips set in a look of determination, his long hands holding the heavy volume in the air before his sight, and expressive in their solid grasp of a fixed and unalterable purpose. George paused on the threshold, wondering for the thousandth time that so much resolution of character as was visible in the least of his father's actions should have produced so little practical result in the struggles of a long life.

'Won't you shut that door, George?' said Jonah Wood, not looking away from his book nor moving a muscle.

George did as he was requested, and came slowly forward. He stood still for a moment before the fireplace, spreading his hands to the blaze.

'Tom Craik is dying,' he said at last, looking at his father's face.

There was an almost imperceptible quiver in the strong hands that held the book. A very slight colour rose in the massive grey face. But that was all. The eyes remained fixed on the page, and the angle at which the volume was supported did not change.

'Well,' said the mechanical voice, 'we must all die some day.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE world was very much surprised when it was informed that Thomas Craik was not dead after all. During several weeks he lay in the utmost danger, and it was little short of a miracle that he was kept alive—one of those miracles which are sometimes performed upon the rich by physicians in luck. While he was ill George, who was disappointed to find that there was so much life in his enemy, made frequent inquiries at the house—a fact of

which Mr. Craik took note, setting it down to the young man's credit. Nor did it escape the keen old man that his sister Totty's expression grew less hopeful as he himself grew better, and that her fits of spasmodic and effusive rejoicing over his recovery were succeeded by periods of abstraction, during which she seemed to be gazing regretfully upon some slowly-receding vision of happiness.

Mrs. Sherrington Trimm was, indeed, not to be envied. In the first place, all immediate prospect of inheriting her brother's fortune was removed by his unexpected convalescence; and, secondly, she had a suspicion that in the midst of his illness he had made some change in the disposition of his wealth. It would be hard to say how this belief had formed itself in her mind, for her husband was a man of honour, and had scrupulously obeyed Craik's injunction to be silent in regard to the will. He found this the more easy because what he liked least in his wife's character was her love of money. Having only one child, he deemed his own and Totty's fortunes more than sufficient, and he feared lest, if she were suddenly enriched beyond her neighbours, she might launch into the career of a leader of society, and take up a position very far from agreeable to his own more modest tastes. Sherry Trimm was an eminently sensible as well as an eminently honourable man. He possessed a very keen sense of the ridiculous, and he knew how easily a woman like Totty could be made the subject of ridicule, if she had her own way, and if she suddenly were placed in circumstances where the question of expenditure need never be taken into consideration. She had rarely lost an opportunity of telling him what she should do if she were enormously rich, and it was not hard to see that she confidently expected to possess such riches as would enable her to carry out what Sherry called her threats.

On the other hand, Mr. Trimm's sense of honour was satisfied by his brother-in-law's new will. There is a great deal more of that sort of manly, honourable feeling among Americans than is dreamed of in European philosophy. Europe calls us a nation of business-men, but it generally forgets that we are not a nation of shopkeepers, and that, if we esteem a merchant as highly as a soldier or a lawyer, it is because we know by experience that the hands which handle money can be kept as clean as those that draw the sword or hold the pen. In strong races the man ennobles the occupation, the occupation does not degrade the man. If Thomas Craik was dishonest, Jonah Wood and Sherrington Trimm

were both as upright gentlemen as any in the whole world. It was not in Jonah Wood's power to recover what had been taken from him by operations that were only just within the pale of the law, because laws have not yet been made for such cases; nor was it Sherrington Trimm's vocation to play upon Tom Craik's conscience in the interests of semi-poetic justice. But Trimm was honourable enough and disinterested enough to rejoice at the prospect of seeing stolen money restored to its possessor, instead of being emptied into his wife's purse, and he was manly enough to have felt the same satisfaction in the act if his own circumstances had been far less flourishing.

But Totty thought very differently of all these things. She had in her much of her brother's nature, and the love of money—which, being interpreted into American, means essentially the love of what money can give—dominated her character, and poisoned the pleasant qualities with which she was undoubtedly endowed. She had, as a natural concomitant, the keenest instinct about money and the quarter from which it was to be expected. Something was wrong in her financial atmosphere, and she felt the diminution of pressure as quickly and as certainly as a good barometer indicates the approaching south wind when the weather is still clear and bright. It was of no use to question her husband, and she knew her brother well enough to be aware that he would conceal his purpose to the last. But there was an element of anxiety and doubt in her life which she had not known before. Tom Craik saw that much in her face, and suspected that it was the result of his recovery. He did not regret what he had done, and he made up his mind to abide by it.

Meanwhile, George Wood varied the dreariness of his hard-working life by seeing as much as possible of the Fearings. He went to the house in Washington Square as often as he dared, and before long his visits had assumed a regularity which was noticeable, to say the least of it. If he had still felt any doubt as to what was passing in his own heart at the end of the first month, he felt none whatever as the spring advanced. He was in love with Constance, and he knew it. The young girl was aware of the fact also, as was her sister, who looked on with evident disapproval.

'Why do you not send the man away?' Grace asked one evening when they were alone.

'Why should I?' inquired Constance, changing colour a little, though her voice was quiet,

'Because you are flirting with him, and no good can come of it,' Grace answered bluntly.

'Flirting? I?' The elder girl raised her eyebrows in innocent surprise. The idea was evidently new to her, and by no means agreeable.

'Yes, flirting. What else can you call it, I would like to know? He comes to see you—oh yes, you cannot deny it. It is certainly not for me. He knows I am engaged; and besides, I think he knows that I do not like him. Very well—he comes to see you, then. You receive him, you smile, you talk, you take an interest in everything he does—I heard you giving him advice the other day. Is not that flirting? He is in love with you, or pretends to be, which is the same thing, and you encourage him.'

'Pretends to be? Why should he pretend?' Constance asked the questions rather dreamily, as though she had put them to herself before, and more than half knew the answer. Grace laughed a little.

'Because you are eminently worth while,' she replied. 'Do you suppose that if you were as poor as he is, he would come so often?'

'That is not very good-natured,' observed Constance, taking up her book again. There was very little surprise in her tone, however, and Grace was glad to note the fact. Her sister was less simple than she had supposed.

'Good nature!' she exclaimed. 'What has good nature to do with it? Do you think Mr. Wood comes here out of good nature? He wants to marry you, my dear. He cannot, and therefore you ought to send him away.'

'If I loved him, I would marry him.'

'But you do not. And, besides, the thing is absurd! A man with no position of any sort—none of any sort, I assure you—without fortune, and, what is much worse, without any profession.'

'Literature is a profession.'

'Oh, literature!—yes. Of course it is. But those miserable little criticisms he writes are not literature. Why does he not write a book, or even join a newspaper and be a journalist?'

'Perhaps he will. I am always telling him that he should. And as for position, he is a gentleman, whether he chooses to go into society or not. His father was a New Englander, I believe—but I have heard poor papa say very nice things about him—and

his mother was a Winton, and a cousin of Mrs. Trimm's. There is nothing better than that, I suppose.'

'Yes—that odious Totty!' exclaimed Grace, in a tone of unmeasured contempt. 'She brought him here in the hope that one of us would take a fancy to him, and help her poor relation out of his difficulties. Besides, she is the silliest, shallowest little woman I ever knew!'

'I dare say. I am not fond of her. But you are unjust to Mr. Wood. He is very talented, and he works very hard——'

'At what? At those wretched little paragraphs? I could write a dozen of them in an hour?'

'I could not. One has to read the books first, you know.'

'Well—say two hours, then. I am sure I could write a dozen in two hours. Such stuff, my dear! You are dazzled by his conversation. He does talk fairly well, when he pleases. I admit that.'

'I am glad you leave him something,' said Constance. 'As for my marrying him, that is a very different matter. I have not the slightest idea of doing that. To be quite honest, the idea has crossed my mind that he might wish it——'

'And yet you let him come?'

'Yes. I cannot tell him not to come here, and I like him too much to be unkind to him—to be cold and rude for the sake of sending him away. If he ever speaks of it, it will be time to tell him what I think. If he does not, it does him no harm—nor me either, as far as I can see.'

'I do not know. It seems to me that to encourage a man, and then drop him when he can hold his tongue no longer, is the reverse of human kindness.'

'And it seems to me, my dear, that you are beginning to argue from another side of the question. I did not understand that it was out of consideration for Mr. Wood——'

'No, it was not,' Grace admitted, with a laugh. 'I am cruel enough to wish that you would be unkind to him without waiting for him to offer himself. You are a very inscrutable person, Conny. I wish I could find out what you really think.'

Constance made no answer, but smiled gently at her sister as she took up her book for the second time. She began to read, as though she did not care to continue the conversation, and Grace made no effort to renew it. She understood enough of Constance's character to be sure that she could never understand it thoroughly, and she relinquished the attempt to ascertain the real state of

things. If Constance had vouchsafed any reply, she would have said that she was in considerable perplexity concerning her own thoughts. For the present, however, her doubts gave her very little trouble. She possessed one of those calm characters which never force their owners to be in a hurry about a decision, and she was now, as always, quite willing to wait and see what course her inclinations would take.

Calmness of this sort is often the result of an inborn distrust of motives in oneself and in others, combined with an almost total absence of impatience. The idea that it is in general better to wait than to act gets the upper hand of the whole nature, and keeps it, perhaps throughout life, perhaps only until some strong and disturbing passion breaks down the fabric of indolent prejudice which surrounds such minds. Constance had thought of most of the points which her sister had brought up against George Wood, and was not at all surprised to hear Grace speak as she had spoken. On the contrary, she felt a sort of mental pride in having herself discerned all the objections which stood in the way of her loving George. None of them had appeared to be insurmountable, because none of them were in reality quite just. She was willing to admit that her fortune might be what most attracted him, but she had no proof of the fact; and having doubted him, she was quite as much inclined to doubt her own judgment of him. His social position was not satisfactory, as Grace had said, but she had come to the conclusion that this was due to his distaste for society, especially since she had heard many persons of her acquaintance express their regret that the two Woods could not forget old scores. His literary performances were assuredly not of the first order, and she felt an odd sort of shame for him, when she thought of the poor little paragraphs he turned out in the papers, and compared the work with his conversation. But George had often explained to her that he was obliged to write his notices in a certain way, and that he occupied his spare time in producing matter of a very different description. In fact, there were answers to every one of Grace's objections, and Constance had already framed for herself the replies she was prepared to give her sister.

Her principal difficulty lay in another direction. Was the very decided liking she felt for George Wood the beginning of love, or was it not? That it was not love at the present time she was convinced, for her instinct told her truly that, if she had loved him, she could not have discussed him so calmly. What

she defined as her liking was, however, already so pronounced that she could see no objection to allowing it to turn into something warmer and stronger if it would, provided she were able to convince herself of George's sincerity. Her fortune was certainly in the way. What man in such circumstances, she asked herself, could be indifferent to the prospect of such a luxurious independence as was hers to confer upon him she married? She wished that some concatenation of events might deprive her of her wealth for a time long enough to admit of her trying the great experiment, on condition that it might be restored to her so soon as the question was decided in one way or the other. Nevertheless, she believed that, if she really loved him, she could forget to doubt the simplicity of his affection.

George, on his part, was not less sensitive upon the same point. His hatred of all sordid considerations was such that he feared lest his intentions might be misinterpreted wherever there was a question of money. On the other hand, he was becoming aware that his intercourse with Constance Fearing could not continue much longer upon its present footing. There existed no pretext of relationship to justify the intimacy that had sprung out of his visits, and even in a society in which the greatest latitude is often allowed to young and marriageable women his assiduity could not fail to attract attention. The fact that the two young girls had a companion in the person of an elderly lady distantly connected with them did not materially help matters. She was a faded, timid, retiring woman, who was rarely seen, and who, indeed, took pains to keep herself out of the way when there were any visitors, fearing always to intrude where she might not be wanted. George had seen her once or twice, but was convinced that she did not know him by sight. He knew, however, that his frequent visits had been the subject of remark among the young girls' numerous acquaintance, for his cousin Totty had told him so with evident satisfaction, and he guessed from Grace's behaviour that she at least would be glad to see no more of him. What Grace had told her sister, however, was strictly true. Constance encouraged him. George was neither tactless nor fatuous, and if Constance had shown that his presence was distasteful to her he would have kept away, and cured himself of his half-developed attachment as best he could.

About this time an incident occurred which was destined to produce a very decided effect upon his life. One afternoon in May he was walking slowly down Fifth Avenue on his way to

Washington Square, when he suddenly found himself face to face with old Tom Craik, who was at that moment coming out of one of the clubs. The old man was not as erect as he had been before his illness, but he was much less broken down than George had supposed. His keen eyes still peered curiously into the face of every passer, and he still set down his stick with a sharp, determined rap at every step. Before George could avoid the meeting, as he would instinctively have done had there been time, he was conscious of being under his relation's inquiring glance. He was not sure that the latter recognised him, but he knew that a recognition was possible. Under the circumstances he could not do less than greet his father's enemy, who was doubtless aware of his many inquiries during the period of danger. George lifted his hat civilly, and would have passed on, but the old gentleman stopped him, to his great surprise, and held out a thin hand, tightly encased in a straw-coloured glove—he permitted himself certain exaggerations of dress, which, somehow, were not altogether incongruous in his case.

'You are George Wood?' he asked. George was struck by the disagreeable nature of his voice, and at the same time by the speaker's evident intention to make it sound pleasantly.

'Yes, Mr. Craik,' the young man answered, still somewhat confused by the suddenness of the meeting.

'I am glad I have met you. It was kind of you to ask after me when I was down. I thank you. It showed a good heart.'

Tom Craik was sincere, and George looked in vain for the trace of a sneer on the parchment that covered the worn features, and listened without detecting the least modulation of irony in the tones of the cracked voice. He felt a sharp sting of remorse in his heart. What he had meant for something very like an insult had been misunderstood, had been kindly received, and now he was to be thanked for it.

'I hate you, and I asked because I wanted to be told that you were dead'—he could not say that, though the words were in his mind, and he could almost hear himself speaking them. A flush of shame rose to his face.

'It seemed natural to inquire,' he said, after a moment's hesitation. It had seemed very natural to him, as he remembered.

'Did it? Well, I am glad it did, then. It would not have seemed so to every young man in your position.' Good day—good day to you. Come and see me, if you care to.'

Again the thin, gloved hand grasped his, and George was left alone on the pavement, listening to the sharp rap of the stick on the stones as the old man walked rapidly away. He stood still for a moment, and then went on down the Avenue. The dry, regular rapping of that stick was peculiarly disagreeable, and he seemed to hear it long after he was out of earshot.

He was very much annoyed. More than that, he was sincerely distressed. Could he have guessed what had been the practical result of his inquiries during the illness, he would assuredly have even then turned and overtaken Tom Craik, and would have explained with savage frankness that he was no friend, but a bitter enemy, who would have rejoiced to hear that death had followed and overtaken its victim; but, since he could not dream of what had happened, it appeared to him that any explanation would be an act of perfectly gratuitous brutality. It was not likely that he should meet the old man often, and there would certainly be no necessity for any further exchange of civilities. He suffered all the more in his pride because he must henceforth accept the credit of having seemed kindly disposed.

Then he remembered how, at his second meeting with Constance Fearing, she had earnestly advised him not to do what had led to the present situation. It would have been different had he known her as he knew her now, had he loved her as he undoubtedly loved her to-day. But as things had been then, he hardly blamed himself for having been roused to opposition by his strong dislike of advice.

'I have received the reward of my iniquities,' he said, as he sat down in his accustomed seat and looked at her delicate face.

'What has happened to you?' she asked, raising her eyes with evident interest.

'Something very disagreeable. Do you like to hear confessions? And when you do, are you inclined to give absolution to your penitents?'

'What is it? What do you want to tell me?' Her face expressed some uneasiness.

'Do you remember, when I first came here—the second time, I should say—when Tom Craik was in such a bad way, and I hoped he would die? You know, I told you I would go and leave a card, with inquiries, and you advised me not to. I went—in fact, I called several times.'

'You never told me. Why should you? It was foolish of me, too. It was none of my business.'

'I wish I had taken your advice. The old man got well again, but I have not seen him till to-day. Just now, as I walked here, he was coming out of his club, and I ran against him before I knew where I was. Do you know, he had taken my inquiries seriously—thought I asked out of pure milk-and-water of human-kindness, so to say—thanked me so nicely, and asked me to go and see him! I felt like such a beast.'

Constance laughed; and for some reason or other the high, musical ring of her laughter did not give George as much satisfaction as usual.

'What did you do?' she asked a moment later.

'I hardly know. I could not tell him to his face that he had not appreciated my peculiar style of humour, that I loathed him as I loathed the plague, and that I had called to know whether the undertaker was in the house. I believe I said something civil—contemptibly civil, considering the circumstances—and he left me in front of the club feeling as if I had eaten something I did not like. I wish you had been there to get me out of the scrape with some more good advice.'

'I? Why should I——?'

'Because, after all, you got me into it, Miss Fearing,' George answered, rather sadly. 'So, perhaps, you would have known what to do this time.'

'I got you into the scrape?' Constance looked as much distressed as though it were really all her fault.

'Oh, no—I am not in earnest, exactly. Only, I have such an abominably contrary nature that I went to Tom Craik's door just because you advised me not to—that is all. I had only seen you twice then—and——;' he stopped, and looked fixedly at the young girl's face.

'I knew I was wrong even then,' Constance answered, with a faint blush. The colour was not the result of any present thought, nor of any suspicion of what George was about to say; it was due to her recollection of her conduct on that long-remembered afternoon nearly four months earlier.

'No. I ought to have known that you were right. If you were to give me advice now——'

'I would rather not,' interrupted the young girl.

'I would follow it, if you did,' said George, earnestly. 'There is a great difference between that time and this.'

'Is there?'

'Yes. Do you not feel it?'

'I know you better than I did.'

'And I know you better—very much better.'

'I am glad that makes you more ready to follow sensible advice——'

'Your advice, Miss Fearing. I did not mean——'

'Mine, then, if you like it better. But I shall never offer you any more. I have offered you too much already, and I am sorry for it.'

'I would rather you gave me advice—than nothing,' said George in a lower voice.

'What else should I give you?' Her voice had a ring of surprise in it. She seemed startled.

'What you will never give, I am afraid—what I have little enough the right to ask.'

Constance laid down the work she held, and looked out of the window. There was a strange expression in her face, as though she were wavering between fear and satisfaction.

'Mr. Wood,' she said suddenly, 'you are making love to me.'

'I know I am. I mean to,' he answered, with an odd roughness, as the light flashed into his eyes. Then, all at once, his voice softened wonderfully. 'I do it badly—forgive me—I never did it before. I should not be doing it now if I could help myself—but I cannot. This once—this once only—Constance, I love you with all my heart.'

He was timid, and women, whether old or young, do not like timidity. It was not that he lacked either force or courage by nature, nor any of those qualities whereby women are won. But the life he had led had kept him younger than he believed himself to be, and his solitary existence had given his ideal of Constance the opportunity of developing more quickly than the reality. He loved her, it is true, but as yet in a peaceful, unruffled way, which partook more of boundless admiration than of passion. An older man would have recognised the difference in himself. The girl's finer perceptions were aware of it without comprehending it in the least. Nevertheless, it was an immense satisfaction to George to speak out the words which in his heart had so long been written as a motto about the shrine of his imagination.

Constance said nothing in answer, but rose, after a moment's pause, and went and stood before the fireplace, now filled with ferns and plants, for the weather was already warm. She turned her back upon George, and seemed to be looking at the things

that stood on the chimney-piece. George rose, too, and came and stood beside her, trying to see her face.

'Are you angry?' he asked softly. 'Have I offended you?'

'No, I am not angry,' she answered. 'But—but—was there any use in saying it?'

'You do not love me at all? You do not care whether I come or go?'

She pitied him, for his disappointment was genuine, and she knew that he suffered something, though it might not be very much.

'I do not know what love is,' she said thoughtfully. 'Yes—I care. I like to see you—I am interested in what you do—I should be sorry never to see you again; but I do not feel—what is it one should feel when one loves?'

'Is there any one—any man—whom you like better than you like me?'

'No,' she answered, with some hesitation, 'I do not think there is.'

'And there is a chance that you may like me better still—that you may some day even love me?'

'Perhaps. I cannot tell. I have not known you very long.'

'It seems long to me; but you give me all I ask—more than I had a right to hope for. I thank you with all my heart.'

'There is little to thank me for. Do you think I mean more than I say?' She turned her head, and looked calmly into his eyes. 'Do you think I am promising anything?'

'I would like to think so. But what could you promise me? You would not marry me, even if you loved me as I love you.'

'You are wrong. If I loved you, I would marry you—if I were sure that your love was real, too. But it is not. I am sure it is not. You make yourself think you love me——'

The young man's dark face seemed to grow darker still as she watched it. There was passion in it now, but of a kind other than loving. His over-sensitive nature had already taken offence.

'Please do not go on, Miss Fearing,' he said, in a low voice that trembled angrily. 'You have said enough already.'

Constance drew back in extreme surprise, and looked as though she had misunderstood him.

'Why—what have I said?' she asked.

'You know what you meant. You are cruel and unjust.'

There was a short pause, during which Constance seemed to be trying to grasp the situation, while George stood at the other end of the chimney-piece, staring at the pattern in the carpet. The girl's first impulse was to leave the room, for his anger frightened and repelled her. But she was too sensible for that, and she thought she knew him too well to let such a scene pass without an explanation. She gathered all her courage and faced him again.

'Mr. Wood,' she said, with a firmness he had never seen in her, 'I give you my word that I meant nothing in the least unkind. It is you who are doing me an injustice. I have a right to know what you understood from my words.'

'What could you have meant?' he asked coldly. 'You are, I believe, very rich. Everyone knows that I am very poor. You say that I make myself think I love you——'

'Good heavens!' cried Constance. 'You do not mean to say that you thought that! But I never said it, I never meant it—I would not think it——'

There was a little exaggeration in the last words. She had thought of it, and that recently, though not when she had spoken. It was enough, however. George believed her, and the cloud disappeared from his face. It was she who took his hand first, and the grasp was almost affectionate in its warmth.

'You will never think that of me?' he asked earnestly.

'Never! Forgive me if any word of mine could have seemed to mean that I did.'

'Thank you,' he answered. 'It is only my own folly, of course, and I am the one to be forgiven. Things may be different some day.'

'Yes,' assented Constance, with a little hesitation—'some day.'

A moment later George left the house, feeling as a soldier does who has been under fire for the first time.

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

A SCHOOL OF FICTION.

MR. WALTER BESANT, after inventing a People's Palace, in a novel, has seen it become a fact. Now, after inventing a School of Fiction as a possible fact, why should he not make it the ground of a novel? It sounds as if it were a topic which would suit his art, for it has just enough of the fantastic, while on every side it touches reality. A School of Fiction, we say, but why not a University? The University would need many colleges. There might be several in London alone for the observation of the manners of Londoners, and several in various parts of the country. Then we need an Italian college, a college in France, and another in Germany, while the classics of romance demand halls, at least, in South and Central Africa, in Chiapas, in Hindostan, and, in fact, wherever there are disciples and matter for study. The scheme would bring together people who, certainly, might not otherwise meet, for almost everybody but Mr. Gladstone has had some intention of writing a novel, and of course would be glad to begin by a suitable course of education. This I fear would, in many cases, have to be almost elementary. There would, of course, be matriculation examinations, including an easy French paper; for example—

I.

Correct, where necessary, the following :—

A l'outrance. Bête Noire. Le père du joli fille est le fils de jardinier. J'ai perdu mon rose.

II.

Conjugate the verb 'Aimer.'

III.

'Il n'est qui le premier pas que coûte.' How do you write this? Give your reasons.

With other simple conundrums.

Competitors will be requested to define the terms 'plagiarism,' 'criticism,' 'edition,' 'realism,' 'romance,' 'naturalism,' and to discuss the comparative merits of half profits, and of royalties, with or without the use of algebra.

Sketches in character-drawing would also be required. A simple exercise would be to describe, in an epigrammatic manner, the invigilating examiner, with a fanciful outline of his probable sentimental history. As minute observation has to be cultivated, competitors might be asked to describe their own aunts, a class of the community often studied, and too frequently caricatured, by beginners, whose knowledge of life is often scanty. The local curate, doctor, lawyer, are also suggested as easy elementary subjects, which should certainly be undertaken before going on to earls, ladies of fashion, burglars, villains, and similar advanced and complicated themes.

No doubt a few simple and ordinary amorous problems will have to be stated and solved, as : A., in love with B., is engaged to C. What, in your opinion, is the proper solution of the case ?

B., married to C. (who is twice her age), is devoted to A., who is engaged to D., but is in love with E. How would you propose to solve this ?

B., in love with C., is aware that C. has committed the murder with which D. is charged. What course would you advise B. to pursue ?

A. is acquainted with the whereabouts of a treasure in Terra del Fuego. It consists of cathedral plate, and A. is an elder of the Free Church of Scotland. Indicate the most probable action of A.

A., a clairvoyant, in love with B., has seen, in a trance, C. (married to B.) flirting with D., a Kamschatkan woman, in the neighbourhood of the North Pole. B. is disinclined to believe in clairvoyance. Discuss the position and prospects of A.

Give your opinion on unhappy endings, and on second marriages.

A working knowledge of Conveyancing, Baccarat, the Laws of the Duel, the Scottish Marriage Law, and that of Criminal Pro-

cedure will be required from all candidates for matriculation. This examination would weed them out a good deal. Many would be plucked; and, as nobody would be allowed to publish a novel without a degree in the Art, the output of romance would undergo a salutary reduction; for it is high time that the state interfered, reduced the most prolific authors to not more than nine volumes yearly, and generally looked after the interests of the consumer and the community. The professors, one presumes, would lecture, as a rule, *sine ulla solemnitate*. One would tell how he came to write his own novel, what suggested it, how it developed, how his characters took shape in his mind, and so on. Very likely a novel is sometimes suggested by a title. For example, were I a novelist, I would write one called *L'Hôtel Nécropole*, as much as I could manage in the manner of Mr. Henry James. Already the characters and the descriptions—perhaps especially the latter—come over me like a wave. I see the gloomy, new, bleak, white hotel, the consumptive inmates, the undeveloped orange-trees in the bare gardens; I hear the pulmonary talk at the *table d'hôte*; I have everything but the heroine. She is always a difficulty. Such a scheme, if I were a scholar of Mr. Besant's college, I would carry to my tutor. Some incidents I really must have, and I insist on the burning down of the hotel by an inmate who chevies a mosquito with a candle, in his mosquito curtains. May I have the Riviera earthquake, and is Monte Carlo to be introduced? Dear imaginary novel! if I were but a Fellow on Mr. Besant's foundation, how I would cherish it! Professors and tutors will take walks with their pupils, and make them describe sunsets, and so forth. Adjectives will need a great deal of looking after. Would the learned Professor of Style allow Mr. Saltus to talk of tortoiseshell eyes? This is a very delicate question. It is Mary Magdalene, I think, in Mr. Saltus's romance of that name who has eyes of tortoiseshell. This is a bold innovation, yet some eyes *are* like tortoiseshell, more or less. One can imagine very endearing relations between the professors and some of their pupils, just as in the old universities, where there are now girlish undergraduates. This is where Mr. Besant has a chance, if he ever listens to the prayer of our petition, and writes a novel on a School of Fiction. Would his villains be kept on the premises, and would Miss Cobbe object to psychological vivisection and the use of the moral scalpel, about which we hear so much? I do not suggest the appointment of a Professor of *Naturalisme*, not judging the times ripe for that chair—at least, in mixed classes. Would

that one could have a small berth in the University, perhaps as a mere corrector of classic grammar to Mr. Edgar Saltus, so that this accomplished author might get his Greek and Latin plurals comparatively right! The lowly post of Mudie's Reader in the new University would suit very well. The question of endowments can be settled by disestablishing the Church in favour of a national institution more in keeping with the wants of the age.



The following paragraphs will seem strangely familiar to readers of this Magazine to which Richard Jefferies was so constant a contributor. They were accidentally found by Mrs. Jefferies and forwarded to the editor. They are but scraps, but they serve to recall the 'touch of a vanished hand, the sound of a voice that is still.'

THE GOLDEN-CRESTED WREN.

THIS lovely little bird is so small and light that it can cling suspended on the end of a single narrow leaf, or needle of pine, and it does not depress the least branch on which it may alight. The gold crest frequents the loneliest heath, the deepest pine wood, and the immediate neighbourhood of dwellings indifferently. A Scotch fir or pine grew so near a house in which I once lived that the boughs almost brushed the window, and when confined to my room by illness, it gave me much pleasure to watch a pair of these wrens who frequently visited the tree. They are also fond of thick thorn hedges, and, like all birds, have their favourite localities, so that if you see them once or twice in one place you should mark the tree or bush, for there they are almost certain to return. It would be quite possible for a person to pass several years in the country and never see one of these birds. There is a trick in finding birds' nests, and a trick in seeing birds. The first I noticed was in an orchard; soon after I found a second in a yew-tree (close to a window), and after that constantly came upon them as they crept through brambles or in hedgerows, or a mere speck up in a fir-tree. So soon as I had seen one I saw plenty.



AN EXTINCT RACE.

THERE is something very mournful in a deserted house, and the feeling is still further intensified if it happens to have once been a school, where a minor world played out its little drama, and left

its history written on the walls. For a great boys' school is like a kingdom with its monarchs, its ministers, and executioners, and even its changes of dynasty. Such a house stood no long while since on the northern borderland of Wilts and Berks, a mansion in its origin back in the days of Charles II., and not utterly unconnected with the great events of those times, but which, for hard on a hundred years—from the middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century—was used as a superior grammar-school, or college as it would now be called. Gradually falling in reputation, and supplanted by modern rivals for fifteen or twenty years, the huge hollow halls and endless dormitories were silent, and the storms that sway with savage force down from the hills wreaked their will upon the windows and the rotting roof. Inside the refectory—the windows being blown in—and over the antique-carved mantelpiece, two swallows' nests had been built to the ceiling or cornice. The whitewashed walls were yellow and green with damp, and covered with patches of saltpetre efflorescence. But they still bore, legible and plain, the hasty inscriptions scrawled on them, years and years before, by hands then young, but by now returned to dust. The history of this little kingdom, the hopes and joys, the fears and hatreds of the subjects, still remained, and might be gathered from these writings on the walls, just as are the history of Egypt and of Assyria now deciphered from the palaces and tombs. Here were the names of the kings—the headmasters—generally with some rough doggrel verse, not often very flattering, and illustrated with outline portraits. Here were caricatures of the ushers and tutors, hidden in some corner of the dormitories once, no doubt, concealed by the furniture, coupled with the very freest personalities, mostly in pencil, but often done with a burnt stick. Dates were scattered everywhere—not often the year, but the day of the month, doubtless memorable from some expedition, or lark played off half a century since. Now and then there was a quotation from the classics—one describing the groaning and shouting of the dying Hercules, till the rocks and the sad hills resounded, which irresistibly suggested the idea of a thorough caning. Other inscriptions were a mixture of Latin and any English words that happened to rhyme, together producing the most extraordinary jumble. Where now are the merry hearts that traced these lines upon the plaster in an idle mood? Attached to the mansion was a great garden, or rather wilderness, with yew hedges ten feet high and almost as thick, a splendid

filbert walk, an orchard, with a sun-dial. It is all—mansion and garden, noble yew-tree hedges and filbert walk, sun-dial and all—swept away now. The very plaster upon which generation after generation of boys recorded their history has been torn down, and has crumbled into dust. Greater kingdoms than this have disappeared since the world began, leaving not a sign even of their former existence.

ORCHIS MASCULA.

THE *Orchis mascula* grew in the brook corner and in early spring sent up a tall spike of purple flowers. This plant stood alone in an angle of the brook and a hedge, within sound of water ceaselessly falling over a dam. In those days it had an aspect of enchantment to me; not only on account of its singular appearance so different from other flowers, but because in old folios I had read that it could call up the passion of love. There was something in the root beneath the sward which could make a heart beat faster. The common modern books—I call them common of malice prepense—were silent on these things. Their dry and formal knowledge was without interest, mere lists of petals and pistils, a dried herbarium of plants that fell to pieces at the touch of the fingers. Only by chipping away at hard old Latin, contracted and dogged in more senses than one, and by gathering together scattered passages in classic authors, could anything be learned. Then there arose another difficulty, how to identify the magic plants? The same description will very nearly fit several flowers, especially when not actually in flower; how determine which really was the true root? The uncertainty and speculation kept up the pleasure, till at last I should not have cared to have had the original question answered. With my gun under my arm I used to look at the orchis from time to time so long as the spotted leaves were visible till the grass grew too long.

* * *

The most virtuous and learned of the evening papers has lately discovered a new plagiarist. The sinner is a young lady of some eight summers, who recently made the innocent remark on being reminded of another lady by a pig. Mr. Du Maurier illustrated the harmless nursery legend in *Punch*, and the evening paper immediately announced that a similar unconscious jest

had been made by a clown in a poem of Oliver Goldsmith's. Something not very unlike it also appears in a speech in *L'École des Femmes*; beyond this I cannot follow it, but Molière was a noted thief, as the critics of his age took care to inform the public. Still, in the case of the little girl, the remark was original, for it is unlikely that she had ever even heard of Goldsmith or Molière. Her tender age and unsullied conscience have probably prevented her from defending her originality in the Press, but as she is perhaps the youngest person ever charged with trusting to her memory for her jokes, I venture to offer this defence of her conduct.

* * *

The Scottish angler has begun to find out that there is something in the low English cunning of the dry fly. Lately, on the Tummell, I and a Northern angler saw some fish rising to a fly not unlike a 'Greenwell's Glory.' At the usual Scotch three wet flies on one cast they never glanced. The present writer, therefore, by precept much more than example, taught his Caledonian friend the trick, and he promptly cleared that pool of rising trout. They scarcely reached an average of three-quarters of a pound, but they looked much bigger when rising 'heads and tails' at the fly. This April has been a very late season in the North. Snow shone low down on all the hills; if ever there was any wind it was an inconstant and freezing puff from the north-east. The big trout in Loch Tummell lay low, and no five-pounders, nor even three-pounders, perhaps, would look at the fly. When the loch was absolutely still, when the sun shone, and the fly came out, the monsters began to move, showing their broad backs and greedy snouts. Perhaps it is possible to take Loch Tummell trout with the dry fly, but it is, of course, infinitely more difficult than in a river, owing to the absence of current. Any master who can do this trick would have rare sport on Loch Tummell. The loch is proverbially 'dour;' you whip, and whip, and, in a frozen April, never see a fin. In fact, you might as well be salmon-fishing. The prizes are great, but they seldom come to hand.

* * *

We spoke lately of the Indian Rope Trick. Far from books, I cannot verify the reference in the Life of Apollonius of Tyana, where it is said to occur. But the following MS. notes by the late Colonel Henry Yule contain a good deal of information. It

is all of a hearsay sort, except the last item, by a mediæval Arab traveller :—

MARVELS OF ORIENTAL CONJURING.

As I write with much fatigue, I shall not here transcribe anything that is of easy access in print ; and I refer, therefore, to the Note 9, Book I., chapter xi., preferably in second edition (of Marco Polo) for the quotations already published.

Extract from a letter to me from R. B. Shaw (the first English traveller to reach Kashgar), dated Lahore, December 1, 1875 :—

‘I have heard stories related regarding a Buddhist high priest, whose temple is said to be not far to the east of Lanchu [in N.W. China], which reminds me of Marco Polo and Kubla Khan. The high priest is said to have the magic power of attracting cups and plates to him from a distance, so that things fly through the air into his hands. . . .

‘A *propos* of magic, a Manchu, long resident at Ila, described to me, amongst other feats of conjuring which he had seen, the rope-trick, by which a man and boy are said to ascend out of sight towards the sky, whence the severed limbs of the boy are afterwards thrown down. The man was himself a conjurer of some reputation, but did not pretend to be able to perform the trick. But it would seem that the tradition of it remains in those regions.’

In ‘Glimpses in the Twilight,’ by the Rev. Fred. Lee, D.D., 1885, pp. 370–372, there is a very remarkable account of the rope-trick, so far as the cords being thrown up into the air, and the operator *spinning* up it and disappearing.

Ovington, in his ‘Voyage to Surat in the year 1689,’ p. 258, has the following :—

‘Among the men, whose employment it is to divert spectators with amazing shows and sights, some, they say, will take in their hands a clew of thread, and throw it upward in the air till it all unravels, and they, climbing up themselves by this tender thread to the top of it, presently fall down piecemeal upon the ground, and when all is dropt, unite again the parted members.’

The *Weekly Dispatch* of September 15, 1889, under the heading ‘An Indian Juggling Story,’ begins :

‘There would appear’ (says the *Times of India*) ‘to be a fine field of unworked romance in the annals of Indian jugglery.

One Siddeshur Mitter, writing to the Calcutta paper, gives a thrilling account of a conjurer's feat which he witnessed recently in one of the villages of the Hooghly district. This is a repetition of the rope-trick, except that a long bamboo is substituted for the rope, and the boy who ascends disappears at the top of the bamboo.'

I have had some search made in the preceding numbers of the *Times of India*, but I have not yet succeeded in finding the original statement.

The following is the passage from Ibn Batuto in which he describes the occurrence in India to which he alludes in his account of the rope-trick as seen in China; after some passages about witches and the application of the water ordeal to them in the Jumna, he goes on :

'One day when I was residing at the Court at Delhi, the Sultan sent for me. I went to his presence and found him in his cabinet having with him several of his familiar associates and two of those Jogis. These people wrap themselves in mantles and cover their heads, because they are in the habit of removing the hair of their heads with ashes, as other people do to remove the hair from their armpits. The Sultan desired me to sit down, and when I had done so he said to these two Jogis: "This foreigner comes from a far country; show him something, such as he has never witnessed before." "Very good," said they, and then one of them squatted down; then he rose from the ground, in so much that he remained in the air above us in the position of a man squatting. I was astonished and seized with fear, and I fell in a swoon. The Sultan ordered them to give me a potion which he kept ready; I came to myself and sat down again. The man was still in the same position. His comrade took from a bag which he carried a sandal with which he struck the ground, like a man in a rage. The sandal then rose till it was over the neck of the fellow squatted in the air, and then began to hit him on the neck, whilst he came down gradually till finally he was again seated beside us. The Sultan said to me, "The man squatting is the disciple of the owner of the sandal;" then adding, "I am afraid for your reason or I would make them do still more extraordinary things than you have seen."

'So I departed, but I was seized with palpitation of the heart and became ill. The Sultan, however, made them give me a draught which cured me.' 'French Mission,' IV. pp. 38, 39.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following contributions. Sums received after May 10 will be entered in the July number:—

Blackbird 2s. 6d. Mrs. Kelsey (Night Refuge) 10s. Ensham 4s. Leila Gregory (Night Refuge) 15s. L. R. Erskine 2l. 6s. Mrs. Prince 1l. Per Editor of the *Pall Mall Budget* 1l. 5s. 5d.: viz. Anon., Findynate, Perthshire, 2s. 6d.; servants at Findynate, Perthshire, 12s.; G. Appleton 2s. 11d.; H. G. Aldrick 3s.; Miss Crosfield 5s.; box of magazines, J. Waters, Tunbridge Wells. The Sisters have received 2s. 6d. from J. B. for the Night Refuge and some scarves from K. G.

Miss Trench, Pulham St. Mary, Sec. of 'Donna' Knitting Society, acknowledges with many thanks 13 mufflers sent since April 9 (three of them from Anon., near Dundee), and a parcel of old clothes from 'a reader of LONGMAN.'

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The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

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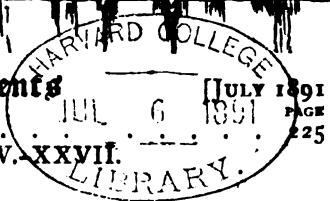
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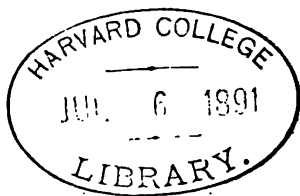
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JULY 1891.

The Mischief of Monica.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

CHAPTER XXV.

FAREWELL TO A HOME.

Farewell! A word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger; yet—farewell!—BYRON.

‘YES, dear, it is all right. I have found out all about it. We can go across the river to Birkenhead—Birkenhead is exactly opposite Liverpool, and the crossing is a mere nothing—and we will take the evening train to London. One leaves about six. It is dark before then, now; so it is hardly likely that anyone will see us; and we shall be in town by a little after eleven o’clock.’

Three weeks had elapsed since the events took place which have been recorded in the last chapter.

The speaker, Monica Lavenham, entered her sister’s bed-chamber, where Isabel, still pale and weak from recent illness, lay on a couch surrounded by piles of luggage. The attack of nervous prostration, brought on by the severity of the shock to which she had been exposed, had only just been sufficiently surmounted to enable the invalid to contemplate removal from the scene of the tragic event; but it had been felt that she now needed change still more than repose, and, to the relief of both, medical permission had been received for the transit. London was to be once more the sisters’ destination.

They had now no home; they were to face the world this time by themselves. Lodgings had been taken for them; their maid had been dismissed, their trunks packed, and the last day at Flodden Hall had come.

'I am really sorry to go,' said Bell, looking round with wistful eyes; 'we have really been rather happy here.'

Monica made no reply. A few minutes afterwards she found an excuse for leaving the apartment, and going downstairs into the large, empty, desolate drawing-room. It had not yet been dismantled.

She stood and looked slowly round and round; backwards and forwards her roving thoughts flew athwart the past three eventful months. How had this place become altered since first she stepped within its walls! Not merely in outward form, but in spirit, essence, and association! She recalled it on that first summer eve, glittering, gorgeous, commodious, but barren of every other attribute; and anon, in the waning light of an autumnal afternoon, with the shadows falling softly on the hearth, and a form, a countenance, a presence there, with whom it would be for ever united in memory.

She sat down in the chair by which Dorrien had knelt; she told herself that he would never kneel thus again.

Since the day on which she had herself dismissed him from the doorstep, he had returned no more. There had, of course, been the excuse of Bell's illness, and Monica had known how to make such an excuse do its part. He might, to be sure, have written, but he had not written. She had understood.

Very bitter had been her thoughts during the past lonely weeks. She had not blamed her lover. She knew better whom to blame.

'If I had not done this,' she said to herself over and over again, 'if I had merely held back at the first—and oh, how easily I might have done that!—all would have been different. It would have still been sad to go from here; sad to lose so kind a friend, so good a home; but at least I should have gone with no sting at my heart. I do not think I love Harry Dorrien—much. At first I did not love him at all. I had not even that excuse. It was sheer vanity, pure, wanton mischief which led me on to do it. Then I grew to like the mischief for its own sake—I mean, I grew to care a little about a man who should have been indifferent to me—and now, I have wrecked his happiness without adding to my own. Daisy would have made him a good, loving wife; now he

will get no wife. He is wretchedly poor ; now he must remain in his poverty. She lives in an uncongenial home from which he would have delivered her ; now she must remain in that home. Who did all this ? I did. I, and for what ? For fun, for occupation, for amusement. I wanted something to do. I was idle. I thought no harm of it. Very well,' and the speaker pressed her lips together stonily. 'Very well. I hope I am satisfied with my work. Dorrien miserable, Daisy deserted, myself triumphant. Oh, what a merry piece of work this has been ! To think that it all should be owing to me ! And all of this,' she suddenly cried, springing to her feet, 'all of this I owe to the world. The world has made me what I am. I am a poor, selfish, vain, shallow, unprincipled girl. I have neither heart nor conscience. I hardly know right from wrong ; no one has taught me ; no one has guided me, nor restrained me. I have been let go where I would. Now,' and she paused, while an expression of troubled thought gathered on her young brow, 'now I begin to see, to know myself. I see a worthless self. I see a cruel, unsparing thief. A girl who could rob another, for the sake of robbing. I did not prize this Dorrien ; at least, I did not once ; I hardly do now. He will soon be forgotten ; but what I cannot forget,' and again her voice rose in broken murmurs as though forced to let loose something of the tumult within, 'what I cannot forget nor forgive, is—myself. Is it too late to be another self ? Shall I ever learn other ways ? I might begin afresh ; it would be for the first time, and I know nothing, I am so ignorant, so foolish ! but still—I think I might—I think I will——.' Alone in the great deserted saloon she sank down upon her knees, and prayed.

‘How long you have been !’ exclaimed Isabel, fretfully, when at length her sister’s step was heard returning. ‘And you know there is still so much to do. There are all the labels to be written——,’

—‘Here they are !’

‘Oh, you have been writing them. I could not think what you were doing. And, Monica, we ought to say “Good-bye” to Jenkinson, and——,’

—‘I have seen Jenkinson, and all the others. You were hardly fit for it.’

‘Oh, thank you ! I am glad to be off that. But I have been thinking—the Schofields ?’

‘The Schofields will not expect us. I told them yesterday

that we should go this week; and we can write when we get to London. You know what Mrs. Schofield is—the kindest person possible, but absolutely unable to keep a secret. It would have been all over the neighbourhood if I had told her that we intended leaving to-night. We both wished particularly to slip away unobserved.’

‘Of course. But, Monica,’ and Bell paused and looked with an air of hesitation at her sister.

‘Well?’ said Monica.

‘Mr. Dorrien,’ said Isabel, in rather a low voice. ‘Ought we not——?’ timidly suggestive. ‘Is there nothing we can do about him?’

‘There is nothing.’ Then Monica walked quickly up and kissed her sister’s brow. ‘Don’t fret, dear Bell. I doubt if Harry Dorrien and I should have suited each other. We are too much alike; and neither of us has yet learned life’s lessons. We—but I need no longer say “we.” There is no “we” now. He is nothing to me; he never ought to have been anything. Let the past be past, and let us both try to do better in the future. There is nothing more to be done ere we leave here,’ continued the speaker, seating herself on a low seat and leaning her head on Isabel’s shoulder. ‘Let us talk about the future. In the future, dear sister,’ and Monica’s voice became gentle and tender, ‘you and I have much to learn. I think I have already begun to learn it; will you also try?’

‘Was that why you would not go to the Delafords?’ asked Isabel, after a pause.

‘Partly, yes.’

‘But the Delafords are not *bad* people, Monica.’

‘They are people like ourselves,’ said Monica, sadly. ‘Without religion, without principle, without very much morality. We should get no good there; we should lose all we have learned here.’

‘But they are our friends,’ murmured the other, in a rueful note. ‘What are we to do for friends if we are not to be with people like ourselves, as you call it?’

‘Do you call the Delafords friends?’ said Monica, with something of her old disdain. ‘Were they “friends” when we came here? When we felt we had not a friend in the world did any one of them come forward?’

‘They have come forward now.’

‘They think we have inherited fortunes; I am afraid that is the simple truth, dear sister.’

‘Do you really think so, Monica?’

‘You are surprised, are you? You have forgotten all past scores? But, Bell, I cannot forget so soon; and neither you nor I will set foot within a door that once was closed to us; though what am I saying?’ she added with a curling lip; ‘the doors will be double-locked, barred, and bolted now. We are not only impoverished, we have been degraded. They will consider that we have lost everything. So we have. Now let us begin again. I have glimmerings of something better in store for you and for me than we have ever yet had. We are now stripped of all hindrances; we have got rid of the past. The future is open to us to make of it our own future. Suppose we try,’ and Monica looked tenderly at her sister.

‘I will do whatever you like, of course,’ replied poor Bell, rather gravely. She was not quite sure what was meant by all this.

‘I have had time to think,’ continued Monica, as though speaking aloud and from an irrepressible impulse, ‘and I do not know that I ever thought before. If all these changes had not come upon us, perhaps I should never have thought at all. Life has been such a whirl with us both. But when our great break-up came, I began to understand how very easy it was to lose everything that was pleasant, and charming, and delightful; how all at once home, friends, pleasures dropped off like leaves from a tree. It seemed as if we were laid bare in a single day. That was my first awakening. You remember how we used to talk about it? I saw then how little real kindness or affection lay beneath the surface of the world we lived in. I almost hated everyone we met. After uncle Lavenham’s decision was made known, the faces we saw on every side, what did they express? Real sorrow and sympathy? Not a glimpse of it. There was hardly a trace of sincere, honest concern on one; it was all curiosity, astonishment, and sham condolence. Then we came here. You know what we found here. I cannot speak of it; I can hardly bear yet to think of it. And how did we—or, at least, how did I—repay all? By bringing the follies of the town into this quiet place. By scorning these good, true people, meddling with their peace, and wounding, cruelly wounding, both their affections and their dignity. Daisy Schofield loved, and I stole her lover.’

Bell started.

‘We spoke openly together that day,’ said Monica, sorrowfully. ‘I always meant to tell you, but I could not trust myself till now.

You were not to be agitated. When I went over to see Daisy the morning after the Carnforths' dinner party, I was in my worst, most foolish mind. I felt giddy with triumph, and perhaps—perhaps with something—some slight touch of another feeling. Mr. Dorrien——' she paused.

'I *know* you care for him,' exclaimed Bell, with impetuous warmth. 'Deny it, as you please, I know you do.'

Monica coloured deeply. She did not even attempt to deny.

'Do not be vexed with me,' continued poor Bell, perceiving the effect of her words with some apprehension. 'I ought not to have said it, but when I hear you talking of "some slight touch," and when I know you so well—now do go on; what did Daisy say? And what did you say? And—and——?'

'I cannot tell you one half. It was all so strange, so very strange! And so wonderful! Bell, she would not blame me—she would not blame him. She said it was natural, spoke as if it were inevitable, that—that——'

—'That he should leave her for you?'

'Yes. If you had only heard her! And so quietly, so simply,—I kept saying to myself "Who is this talking? Who am I listening to?" There was a refinement about it all which I cannot describe. Instead of trying to make me feel ashamed, as she might easily have done—for, indeed, I was ashamed enough without the added reproach of anyone else—she used every argument she could think of to prove to me that I had done no harm. She wished to make out that it was involuntary—I mean my attraction for—for him. She seemed as if she could not bear to think evil of either of us.'

'I always said Daisy was a nice girl, you know, Monica.' It seemed to Bell that she really must edge in a word somewhere. 'I always thought you were too hard upon her, Monica.'

'You did; you were far kinder and better than I. Well, my eyes were opened at last. And I have talked much with Daisy about other things since then. She is so good—you have no idea how good she is, and so humble and modest in reality, though she has that little quick manner that misleads people—that directly she is alone with you, and begins to talk of—of things she really cares for, and believes in—religious things you know,' her tone suitably lowering, 'you can hardly understand how you could ever have seen anything in her to laugh at. There *is* nothing to laugh at. She only needs a little outward polish—a few hints—what is that? She has no innate vulgarity. She would have been a

perfectly fit and proper wife for Mr. Dorrien. He did not value her. But I think he would have learned to value her. He could not have helped loving her.'

'The Schofields could never have been fit for the Dorriens, Monica.'

'I do not think they could. No, certainly, they could not. I can scarcely fancy,' and she smiled, 'Mrs. Schofield as mother-in-law at Cullingdon. But no one knows better than Mr. Dorrien that it is not necessary in these days to cultivate domestic intimacies. Daisy herself is almost as great an anomaly at the Grange as her mother would be at Cullingdon. She is not in sympathy with the rest. We might have found this out long ago, had we taken the trouble. If Mr. Dorrien had married her——,' she paused.

'Well,' said Bell, 'let Mr. Dorrien marry her now.'

Monica's face changed. She looked as if a hand had struck her.

Presently she rose and slipped away, and Isabel smiled a little to herself—but the smile was a doleful one. It was now about three o'clock. They were to leave at four.

The day was densely chill and dark; a sweeping mist from time to time overshadowed the face of the country, and a slight, incessant moan of wind sounded more melancholy and ill-omened than any uproar of the elements would have done.

'It is miserable going away like this!' exclaimed Isabel, when all the preparations were complete, and the two sat waiting for the fly which was to convey them to the station. 'We thought we were miserable when we came, and now I feel as if we had been quite happy then! Do you remember what a glorious summer day it was, Monica? We laughed at the house, and the gardens, and the little lodge, and the minuteness and circumscribedness altogether,—but we did not know how very comfortable it could be, nor how large it would grow. It has grown to be quite large, has it not? One does not seem to miss a park when the road is only a shady lane, through which very few carriages pass. And there is plenty of room at the back, down below the garden, where you and Mr. Dorrien—oh, Monica, I did not mean it!'

'You do not suppose I mind *that*?' said Monica, with a cry of scorn. 'Say "You and Mr. Dorrien" as much as you please, if it is any gratification to you. I can stand more than that. And, for Heaven's sake, let there be no skeleton in our cupboard—even

if our cupboard be bare,' with a faint attempt at jocularly. 'Mr. Dorrien would make a handsome skeleton, I allow, but I do not see him in that light. We'll talk of Harry now and then, Bell. He was rather a nice Harry. I wish I had behaved differently to him. Heigho!' struggling for a lighter mood, 'it will not do to go over all that again just now. We shall have time enough to talk and talk, soon. To-day we must have our wits about us. Travelling alone is a different thing to travelling with Josephine; if we are not eagle-eyed we shall be having our luggage wrongly labelled, our hand-bags purloined, our sticks and umbrellas left in the racks.'

'And there is that dreadful crossing, besides. You say it is a mere nothing, but I know a mere nothing can be very disagreeable. Is it as far as from Dover to Calais?'

'My dear Bell!' Monica laughed.

'Is it half as far? Quarter as far?'

'It is not even quarter as far. I believe it takes about ten minutes, at the outside; and boats cross and re-cross all day long.'

'How shall we know which boat to take?'

'It is called the railway boat; and our cabman will tell us where to go.'

'How shall we get a porter?'

'Plenty of porters on the pier, my dear. There will be not only no difficulty, but an *embarras des richesses*; the difficulty will be to get away from them.'

Isabel sighed. 'I hope it will be all right,' she murmured, dismally. 'But if we had only had someone to go with us! Even George Schofield.'

'You know why we could not ask George.'

'Or Lionel Carnforth.'

'Lionel Carnforth? No, thank you.'

'Or Ernest Rowland.'

'Not even Ernest Rowland.'

'Or—or—or anybody.' She would not again pronounce Dorrien's name.

CHAPTER XXVI.

‘DO YOU ALSO KNOW THAT I DARE NOT SAY MORE?’

‘T were vain to tell thee all I feel,
Or say for thee I’d die.—WADE.

‘Now, you see we have got on very well so far,’ said Monica, cheerfully, as the sisters travelled along through rows of lighted streets, on their way to the landing-stage. ‘We have surmounted the first terrors of the way. This is a very respectable cab, and we are in good time.’

‘In more than “good time,” I hope,’ rejoined her sister, with the anxiety of an unaccustomed traveller; ‘suppose anything goes wrong?’

‘We can afford half-an-hour for anything going wrong. It is exactly ten minutes to five o’clock,’ leaning forward to catch a glimpse of a clock within a watchmaker’s window; ‘we shall be on the other side by a quarter past five, allowing for all delays; and our train does not start till a quarter to six. I believe the people in the railway boat will think us lunatics to cross by the five o’clock boat, whose train only goes to Chester.’

‘But we may have some distance to drive on the other side.’

‘No, my dear Bell, we have no distance to drive on the other side; in fact, we have not to drive at all. We have simply to walk up, while a porter walks up in front of us. The said porter carries our luggage on a truck; we pay the said porter, dismiss the truck, and hop-skip-and-jump into the train.’

‘You seem in good spirits, Monica,’ in dejected, almost reproachful accents. ‘I wish I had your spirits.’

Monica laughed; she was in the humour to laugh. It was so odd, so supremely diverting, to be accused of being in good spirits when she had never felt more forlorn, more unutterably desolate and wretched in her life. Once allow to herself that she was unhappy, once dare to look into the depths of her heavy heart, and there would be no more cheering, hopeful words, no more making light of poor Isabel’s timid alarms, no more beguiling of her pensive regrets. Nay, she must hold down with a firm, unrelaxing grip, every thought, reflection, and apprehension that would tend to unnerve at such a moment. She must be brisk and bantering,

busy and bustling, since thus, and thus only, could the necessary self-control and composure be obtained.

As the vehicle stopped she sprang out, opening the door for herself.

'Railway boat,' she cried, promptly, beginning to pull out the various articles, as she had seen Josephine pull them, and admonishing Bell to sit still till everything was arranged for the transit. 'Railway boat. Is there a porter here?'

'Hi, there!' cried the cabman. 'All right, miss; he's coming,' turning round again. 'Bad night to cross, ladies,' beginning to haul down the trunks from the top.

'Bad night, is it?' said Isabel's voice from within. 'Did he say it was a bad night, Monica?'

'Oh, a "bad night,"' said Monica, condescendingly. 'He only means it is rather dark on the river, and cold, and raw. It is not raining, and we shall all be right directly we are on board.'

'Oh, yes, miss; all right directly you're on board,' assented the cabman, easily. 'The boats are running, aren't they, Jim?' to the porter who came up with his truck. 'Boats are all running, I suppose?'

'Haven't stopped at all to-day,' replied Jim, proceeding to load. 'There was a talk of it an hour ago, but it cleared off again.'

'What cleared off?' inquired Monica, turning to him.

'The fog on the river, miss. It comes down pretty sharp sometimes at this season; and it has been off and on all day. But there's no need to be uneasy, miss. Only the Woodside boats don't run if it's at all bad.'

'But I hope they will run,' replied the young lady, to whom the above conveyed but indifferent consolation. 'We are going to London by the quarter to six o'clock train from Birkenhead.'

'The 5.45? Oh, you'll get over long before the 5.45 anyhow, miss.'

Monica said no more; luckily Isabel had not heard anything; if the worst came to the worst, she told herself, there would be a way out of the difficulty; they could easily go by the London and North-Western from Liverpool.

Originally they had selected the other line of rail, on account of getting in at Paddington Station, thus avoiding the long drive from Euston to Albion Street, in which latter part of the metropolis their lodgings had been taken. But Great Western or London and North-Western made little odds if it came to any real obstacle; and she was almost inclined to turn round as it was, have the trunks replaced on the cab, and drive to Lime Street.

Isabel, however, had alighted, the porter with his load was already on the move, and it only remained to pay the cabman and follow.

Presently Bell slipped her hand through her sister's arm. 'It feels so strange,' she murmured. 'This great, wild, noisy place, and you and me alone here! How far have we to go, Monica?'

'I believe we are on the landing stage now.' They were descending by a covered way, and were in truth on the stage, as she said.

'What numbers of people are going!' cried Bell, next. 'It can't be really a "bad night"'; her mind running on the words; 'or they would not cross in such swarms. Look, Monica, here, there, everywhere—men with little black bags and newspapers. Did you ever see such numbers of little black bags and newspapers? Oh, this is the landing stage? But where is the river?' looking about. 'Where is the river? What is that? Why Monica!' breaking off, and drawing back in consternation. 'How dark it is! A few minutes ago it was quite bright. The gas lamps seem all going out.'

'No fear, miss,' said the porter, looking round encouragingly. 'There's a bit of a fog, but the boats are all running. Here is yours just coming in. She's swinging round now,' setting down his barrow.

'Why, I can hardly see her,' murmured Isabel.

Monica said nothing. In her heart she liked it no better than her sister did. The two had never been used to rough sights and sounds, such journeyings as they had hitherto undertaken having invariably been made under luxurious auspices; and it was accordingly with a sense of trepidation and nervous excitement that she now found herself out on this dark, weird October night, in the midst of a bewildering scene, in charge of a sister who at no time could be reckoned upon as a support, and who was now to be considered almost in the light of an invalid.

Devoutly she now wished they had not devised this route. It had been her own thought, based partly on the desire to escape chance observation by avoiding the station from which they would naturally have taken their departure, and partly, as we have said, from a timely recollection that by starting from Birkenhead they could arrive at Paddington. But she had not calculated on the strangeness, the discomfort of the proceeding.

A thick sea-fog had swept over the river, and only gave up to view the ferry steamers which from time to time arrived from

different parts of the opposite bank, when within a few yards of the landing-stage. At close quarters, however, the boats looked bright and tempting, their cheerful deck-saloons well packed with people, and plenty of light everywhere.

'As soon as we get on board we can sit down comfortably,' said Monica. 'The man says this next is the railway boat, and that it will be cleared in a moment, when we can go on board at once.'

'I am sure I am glad of it,' replied Bell, disconsolately. 'A great, rough man trod on my foot just now, and never even begged my pardon. And they do push and jostle one so.'

'We had better stand back a little, and let this stream pass. Then we can be the first to step in.'

'Monica, is it—is it dangerous the stepping in? Is it over a plank?'

'Dear me, no, child; you have been on a steamboat before; don't be silly. You have got in and got out like anybody else, and never thought about it, when we went abroad.'

'But this is different. It is so dark and dismal——,'

'Oh, come, it is not dark now. Look how those lamps flare. And there is not a breath of wind—and it is not raining. It is quite a soft, mild night.'

'A miserable night—' muttered Bell. Then aloud, 'Nearly all the people are off the boat; let us get in, and have it over. There is our man looking for us too,' and the sisters hurried to the side.

As usual, fear had outstripped danger; in fact there was no danger. Even Isabel Lavenham could find nothing to be nervous about in a broad, well-fenced gangway, compared with which the steamboat planks on which she had often stepped of yore were poor affairs.

Having seen her into the warm, bright saloon, Monica returned to discharge the porter, and then lingered for a few moments in the fresher air, not sorry to be alone.

It occurred to her to tell Bell that she would remain outside during the crossing, provided Bell had no objection, no fears, and no discomfort.

Bell was acquiescent, and she did so. A few minutes afterwards she was ready to repent of having made the request.

She had moved to the side of the vessel, and from thence began to watch idly the new stream of passengers crowd the little gangway and step aboard; and scarcely had she stood there a

minute, ere, in the midst of the throng, a tall figure clad in a long, light coat, such as were in fashion at the period, came into view, and caused her heart to give a sudden plunge. She felt as if a knife had stabbed her.

Her first impulse was to turn round and fly to Isabel's side. Dorrien—for it was he—would probably remain without; most of the men were standing by the cabin-door in order to enjoy cigars in the outer air; and if she sought refuge within, Monica saw in an instant that she would be tolerably secure of escaping observation.

But she had only taken one step back, when she paused, aware that she had been already seen. It was too late.

Was she glad it was too late? She had perceived Dorrien start and stand still, then move forward involuntarily as one urged from behind; and she felt that he must know she had also seen him. She would not wait, or seem to wait, for him. Neither would she lead the way within. She walked slowly along to the far end of the boat, where all was comparative darkness, and where no one who did not wish to do so need follow.

There she stood still, breathing quickly, gazing into vacancy. She would not risk being claimed by any other acquaintance, although such a chance was not a probable one, being out of her own beat; but still, as Dorrien was crossing, others might be crossing, and the risk of accidental, hap-hazard encounters was precisely what she had come this way to avoid.

Had she come also in order to avoid any risk of meeting him? She supposed she had; but still, as he was there, as he was near and knew that she was near, why, why did he not come to her?

This was always the way with Monica. She would be one moment proud, brave, indifferent—and then all at once her poor weak woman's nature would give way, and there would be hot tears in her eyes, and a dumb outcry in her heart.

Now, she heard footsteps pace backwards and forwards behind her, heard from minute to minute short conversations and laughter, heard the 'By your leave,' of the ferry sailors loosening ropes and removing encumbrances—then was aware the boat had swung loose, and on the breast of a rapid current was off in the darkness. Still no one addressed her by her name.

'It is about as dark a night as I ever crossed in,' said a voice near.

'I was prepared to stop on the other side,' said another.

• 'So was I,' chimed in a third. 'I had already wired home,

meaning to have a jolly evening at the theatre. Then my fool of a manager came in and told me the river was clear. You may imagine how I blessed him.'

'You were not half sharp,' laughed one of the others. 'You should have kept it dark that you knew, and been off up town before anyone had told you.'

'My dear Bob, if the boats were running I had to come, and that's all about it—and so had you, for that matter.'

There was a laugh at this.

Each had a domestic autocrat who did not accept excuses.

'Well, if I get drowned some night on this blessed boat,' said Bob, presently, 'I shall have the satisfaction of—hi, what's that? The fog has come down as black as pitch. We shall have an accident in grim earnest this time. 'Pon my word, I don't above half like it. Let us go to the middle of the boat, eh? I once had a bump against the landing stage—' and the voices retreated in the distance.

'It is "as black as pitch,"' murmured Monica to herself. 'I am glad Bell is in the cabin. She has no idea what it is like outside. Not a light to be seen anywhere now.'

There was neither light nor sound beyond the bewildering clang of endless bells and the bellowing of distant fog-horns; while the vibration of the paddles as the boat struggled stoutly to keep her course for another few minutes seemed the only signs of life around.

Then she overheard another dialogue:

'Think there's any danger, Tommy?'

'Danger? No. Beastly bad night, though. If there ever were danger, it would be on a night like this. It is these confoundedly rapid fogs that are down upon you before you know where you are, or where you have got to, that make the danger, such as there is. They are upon you in an instant. Did you notice how it came down just now, black as midnight? There is no time to stop the traffic. But after all, I have crossed every night for the past eight or ten years, and I never heard of any really fatal accident—,' and again the speakers passed on.

'I wish, however, we were across,' thought Monica. 'Even if—oh!'—a sudden frightful shock, a reeling of the floor beneath her feet, she was thrown violently backwards, and would have fallen, but that she was, as it seemed, flung against the breast of some one standing just behind, who received and held her in his

arms. 'Oh, Harry!' she shrieked, 'what is it?' She had known all along that Dorrien was there.

Dorrien was leaning against the curved end of the saloon, and was thus able to withstand the impetus, with which he might otherwise have been borne down.

'It is a collision,' he said. 'We have run into another boat.'

'A collision—oh!' gasped Monica. 'Are we'—clinging to him—'are we going down?' quivering from head to foot.

'I think not. I hope not. It was pretty violent, but,' and he held her close, 'the danger would be immediate, if there is any. I fancy we should know by this time.'

'I know—I know.'

Passengers now hurried past, talking and gesticulating.

'I say—are we free of her?' shouted Dorrien after some of them.

No answer.

'Any harm done?' he called next.

'Don't know,' gruffly back.

'We are *not* free of her,' roared another surly, terrified voice.

Dorrien held his peace. In his heart he was not very much alarmed, but he was unwilling to excite further the trepidation of timid feminine nature, and he perceived that the answers he was likely to get to any inquiries were not such as were calculated to tranquillise.

The boat made a movement.

'We are sinking,' murmured Monica, sick and cold with deadly terror. 'Oh, Harry, we are surely sinking!'

This was the second time she had called him 'Harry.' He still encircled her in his arms.

Meantime the boat was shuddering from bow to stern.

'She is filling, is she not?' whispered Monica.

In reality the steamer was trying to back her engines, and shake herself loose of the smaller vessel into which she had run.

'It is the Tranmere boat,' observed a passing voice now. 'No damage done, they say; but we can't get clear of her. We are both swinging down with the tide.'

'Swinging down, where?' said Monica, lifting her face at this. 'Do they think the danger is past?' and Dorrien perceived that she made a faint effort to withdraw herself from his support.

'That has hardly yet been ascertained,' replied he. Then, bending his head down to hers, 'Monica,' he said, in her ear.

She made no reply. Instinct told her what was coming.

'You called me by my name just now——'; he paused.

'I—I did not know what I was saying.'

'But you knew to whom you were saying it. How did you know that it was I? You never looked round. Were you——' his arms tightening round her—'were you thinking of me?'

'I saw you come in. I knew you were here. I—I——,'

—'You knew, Monica, that wherever *you* were, there would I be. We ought never to have met again; but as we have met, I will say just this once the words that I had meant to keep to myself for ever. They will tell you nothing—you know it already. You have known it all along. From the very first day that we met, *you knew* that I loved you.'

She could not deny it.

'Do you also know,' he went on bitterly, 'that I dare not say more than this?'

'I know—Harry.'

A woman's pity, mingling with a woman's love, prompted the last gently breathed addition. He caught it as a thirsty man snatches at a bubble. 'Harry?' he echoed, and in the sheltering darkness strained her to his breast, and imprinted one passionate kiss upon her lips. 'Oh, God, to be so near happiness!' he cried, 'and to know it is all a dream—a dream,' his voice dying away, his hold relaxing.

It was Monica who first lifted her head after this.

'Dear Harry,' she murmured brokenly, 'I will not pretend I do not understand you, nor—nor—that—I do not care for you. I could—I would—if it might have been,' confusedly seeking to make her meaning plain without putting it into rigorous speech. 'I am glad we have met—at least—yes, I *am* glad—only—let me go, now,' still more softly; 'it is lighter now, and see, we are almost at the landing place;—is not that the landing place? How did we get free? I had forgotten everything—I——' and she stood still, and for a single minute looked quietly and sorrowfully into his face. Her heart whispered that she should never look thus upon it again.

He was not looking at her. He was afraid to look at her.

CHAPTER XXVII.

REMORSE.

Those who inflict must suffer, for they see
The work of their own hearts; and that must be
Our chastisement, or recompense.—COLERIDGE.

‘You will take care of us, and see us off, will you not?’ said Monica presently, with an instinctive desire to soothe the grief which was greater than her own. ‘We have no one with us, and we are not very good travellers. It would be very kind.’

‘Kind,’ he murmured, looking round with hungry eyes.

The parting hour was drawing on, and every moment was a boon.

‘The people are beginning to go,’ suggested she, next. It seemed to her she had got another charge instead of an escort.

Dorrien released her hand.

Glancing towards him, she placed it softly within his arm. A great wave of remorse and tenderness poured in upon her soul, to the exclusion of every other feeling; or if there were room for another feeling, it was for that of reverence. This man with whom she had toyed and trifled, whose heart had been her plaything, and whose honour her sport, was capable of a depth and strength of feeling infinitely above and beyond anything she had ever yet experienced. Her own scarcely acknowledged, reluctantly recognised preference seemed a response so inadequate, so unworthy of the passion which had shaken him to his very centre, that she could but feel anew a prey to the bitterest humiliation, as she confessed to herself that she had been as a child or a fool in thus meddling with a matter so much beyond her.

She drew him forward, but she scarcely cared to address him. When he spoke to her, she answered humbly and timidly. She kept by his side, permitting him to render this and that little service, and accepting the same with anxious gratitude. Whatsoever she fancied he would wish her to do, she did. Too well she knew there was no effort she could now make which would atone for or efface the past.

As for him, he walked as a man to the scaffold. He had taken his farewell of all that made life dear, in that brief moment when he held Monica to his heart, and pressed a kiss upon her

lips—and now he was but dimly conscious of passing events, and was almost indifferent even to the presence of his beloved.

It was this numb anguish which, betrayed upon his countenance, appalled Monica. Stricken with shame and unavailing regrets as she had already been, she had never until now realised the full extent of the havoc she had wrought.

The two therefore held their peace even from words of sorrow.

Neither the one nor the other, I am afraid, thought of poor Isabel, who had been faint with fright, and had been left to the ministrations of strangers.

Bell now appeared at the cabin door in much perturbation and resentment, which restoratives did more for her, it may just be remarked, than any of the more recognised restoratives could have effected. She was prepared to be either indignant or alarmed as the case might be. If Monica had been neglectful, reproaches were on the tip of her tongue; if, on the other hand, Monica, like herself, had been frightened to death, what was to become of them both?

But the sight of Dorrien with her sister was the last for which Isabel's blue eyes had been prepared, and every other thought fled on the instant. What was he doing there? Had the meeting been a premeditated one? If not, by what strange accident had it come about?

With swift recollection she called to mind Monica's elaborate arguments for adopting the tiresome and troublesome route which had like to have proved so disastrous; recalled how every objection had been overruled, and every fear disposed of. What had been the cause of such resolution and such obstinacy? About Dorrien her sister had always been mysterious, tantalising—was Dorrien after all to—to—to—? She paused, and a single glance at Dorrien's face answered the question. No, it was not the face of a happy lover she saw before her. She took his hand almost as silently as Monica might have done.

'Is Mr. Dorrien going by our train?' she inquired, and the inquiry was not made of him.

'He is going to see us into it,' replied Monica, with like gravity. 'Mr. Dorrien was crossing like ourselves, Bell, and we met just now—just as the boats came into collision. Were you afraid, dear? Were you hurt in any way?'

'Of course I was very much afraid, Monica. Who would not have been? I never felt such a shock in my life. We were all thrown from our seats; and then, directly they could, everyone

rushed out of the cabin, leaving us poor creatures who could not go, to our fate. One kind old gentleman took care of me.'

'We had better see to the luggage,' said Monica, who thought she could hear this at another time. 'Shall I show you our luggage?' to Dorrien; the prevailing uneasiness of inexperience affording an excuse for the appeal. 'Our luggage is over there, with all the rest.'

'Forward, ladies, forward, please,' interposed one of the boat's crew. 'The luggage will be sent up directly, miss; it will meet you at the top,' indicating with his forefinger; and in obedience to the mandate, the sisters and Dorrien crossed the gangway, and followed those in front, who were now proceeding up a gentle incline, which rose or sank according to the tide.

At the moment the tide was on the ebb.

These floating stages on the Mersey permit of boats landing and departing at all hours. The boats are broad, shallow, and raft-like; capable of considerable accommodation, and built very strongly; but only suitable for the very short distance they have to traverse between the vast seaport on the one hand and its prosperous and flourishing offshoot on the other. They fly backwards and forwards on the surface of the water, as though scarcely touching more than the summit of the wave. As there are many points of arrival and departure on the one bank, and only one regular landing-stage on the other—while the traffic is enormous—it may be understood how collisions like that above recorded are not infrequent during the winter months, when sea fogs spring up rapidly—oftentimes, indeed, with such surprising swiftness that it is impossible to foresee them in time to prevent accidental encounters—the boats having perforce to ply at full speed in order to keep their bearings, and not be borne hither and thither according to the tide.

Serious accidents are, however, of very rare occurrence, and fatal ones have scarcely ever been recorded. The blows which such crafts are capable of dealing each other are not of a nature to inflict irreparable damage, though the shocks experienced by collisions, or by running too smartly against the landing-stage on either side—another and frequent result of these winter fogs—are often sufficiently alarming.

Some years ago a passenger on one of these Woodside boats, in an agony of terror on perceiving a collision inevitable, threw himself off, when halfway between Liverpool and Birkenhead, under the impression that his only chance of escape from certain

destruction was to do so, and swim for his life. He was rescued, and laughed at—presently ; but on many a dark night, those who pass and re-pass on that watery way are glad to see the lights on the opposite side, and not inclined to jest when those lights are obscured for any length of time. (N.B. But the writer is writing of twenty years ago ; since then there have been many changes, and no one in these days need cross the Mersey who prefers to burrow beneath it. A submarine railway is now open.)

Owing to one delay and another, our travellers did not enter the station from which they were to take their departure until the London train was in waiting, even although the platform was distant only a few minutes' walk from the turnstile at the top of the stage.

Perhaps they did not hurry themselves. It was something to have porters, payments, luggage, to look after ; something to have inquiries to make on the one hand, and information to give on the other. Had there been no such demands filling up the time, how terrible would have been each pause !

Arrived on the platform, Dorrien took their tickets, chose a carriage, gave necessary orders and fees, and all done, stood before the door, unable to leave, and careless of pretext for remaining.

A truck with hot-water tins drew up behind him, and he was requested to step aside while these were inserted in the carriage. He did so, without a word. The intruder vanished. He again resumed his place.

Isabel had ensconced herself in the farthest corner of the compartment, knocked up the arms of the seats, and pronounced her arrangements complete. Monica was seated by the open door.

Gradually she was growing more and more timid in Dorrien's neighbourhood. She respected the burden of his grief. She shrank from seeming to intrude upon it.

But necessity was urgent. If she did not now utter a word, nor ask a question, there might never in all her life come again the opportunity. Obviously there was more than appeared in her lover's overclouded brow and heavy lip. It struck her that, bad as things were, there might have been a gleam of hope even in such a parting—a rift even in this cloud. Why, then, such unrelenting gloom ? Why such utter despair ? A growing uneasiness mingled with curiosity caused her at length to accost him.

‘ Mr. Dorrien ? ’

He leaned forward in an instant.

‘ If I thought I should not wound nor grieve you, I should like

to say a commonplace word,' said Monica, softly. 'You must not hate me for it. I thought perhaps—I should like—I mean,' with hurried breathings, 'would you mind my saying that I shall always think of you as a friend? And you—will you think of me sometimes?' She got no further.

A faint, bitter smile replied. Then, 'Think of you!' he said; and she winced beneath the look accompanying the words.

'But I mean—if—if we should ever happen to meet,' it seemed as if she must in desperation be more plain-spoken, 'you would be able to meet me——,' but here the speaker felt as though she had experienced a check. Dorrien had raised his eyes with an air of surprise, a new surprise, one which had not hitherto been apparent in his demeanour.

'Do you not know, then?' he said.

'Know, Mr. Dorrien? What ought I to know? Is there anything to know?'

'Oh, nothing. Only this,' blowing a smut off his sleeve. 'I am leaving for Australia to-night.'

She fell back in her seat. This, then, was the meaning of it all. This was his farewell for ever. It was no wonder—no wonder; nothing was any wonder. She understood everything, comprehended everything, and bowed beneath the revelation. At that moment she began to love him.

'Yes, I am off to-night; I am starting now,' he said. 'I should have gone by this train, but now I won't—I can't, I dare not. I will take the next; and when we part here—in another few seconds—we shall never meet again. I came this way in order to avoid you, Monica. You, perhaps——?' and he looked the rest. She saw it would have pained him to have known he had not needed to be avoided. She bent her head. Heaven, I think, forgave that mute acquiescence, and Dorrien looked a shade the happier for it.

'I thought that of course you would have heard,' he proceeded in a hurried undertone. 'It was arranged quickly; but news travels fast. I could not stop on here. I had to go somewhere and get rid of myself. We have a cousin—a wild, discreditable sort of a fellow—Luke Dorrien, somewhere in Australia; and I like Luke. We were friends as boys; we shall suit each other now. If he can get me anything to do, I'll do it; if not, we'll starve together. Anyhow, I have done with the Old World, and can but try the New. And now, Monica, dear Monica,'—he took her hand—'God bless you!' he whispered. The train began to move;

a railway attendant took him by the elbow to pull him away; he wrenched himself from the man's grasp, stooped and kissed the hand he held; and the impress of that kiss seemed to Monica's excited and bewildered imagination as though it would never wholly pass away.

All through the weary hours which followed she lay back thinking, thinking. There was time to think now—time for anything now. All at once it seemed as if in the past lay every iota of interest or absorption. As for the future—the future was nothing to her. What could the future do? What did it offer? Poverty, neglect, mortification, and deprivation. These poor girls had always indulged in a perfectly open and admitted avoidance of aught that was poor and shabby, dull and mean. True, in Lowndes Square there had been an undercurrent of shifts and strains, and occasional stintings and pinchings, against which they had in their hearts protested and rebelled,—but on the surface all had been fair enough. They had never been obliged to do what their world would have looked askance upon. They had never been forced to go against the stream in matters of fancy or fashion. They had never had to wear old clothes.

Then at Flodden Hall, although the scene had shifted, and at first had seemed to shift for the worse, there had been many and decided compensations. There had been solid, substantial comfort, flattering homage, and a rapid regaining of complacency under a certain hope and anticipation. Each had alike been shrewd enough to be aware that, once declared their uncle's heiresses, the world—even their own world—would smile upon them again, would indeed smile more indulgently even than before. They had been in a fair way to be content just as the curtain fell once more; and this, be it observed, was apart from every other consideration, since we are referring merely to the sentiments shared by both sisters.

But now, thrown again upon the wide world—with expensive tastes, luxurious habits, exacting whims—with no experience of self-denial, thrift, nor patience—misunderstanding economy, and loathing frugality—unable to do anything or to make their own way in any direction—what chance had they?

Even their beauty would suffer eclipse. Elegance of shape would not appear beneath ill-fitting garments, small feet and hands would pass unobserved when clumsily shod and awkwardly gloved.

'And who will do our hair?' cogitated Bell. She had silky brown hair, which when carefully dressed set off her pure white

forehead and oval cheek to great advantage. Monica's auburn waves needed less arranging; she had only to draw them back from temples round which they clustered almost too thickly, to have all the setting her fair face required. She would often, even in Josephine's day, coil her own tresses; and Isabel, glancing at her as she lay back resting her uncovered head against the cushion, saw that no defter fingers were needed. Round and round the small, shapely head were gathered the ruddy bands. Monica, pale and spent, with weariness and sorrow imprinted on her drooping lips, with wan cheeks and closed eyelids, looking almost ghastly in the light of the single lamp overhead—Monica had yet never looked more beautiful.

Not a single worldly care nor anxiety was troubling her mind. She had for the nonce done with apprehensions and futurity in every shape. Hence that tender expression.

Poor Isabel, racking her brains to conjecture how this or that would happen, how such and such an overture might be received, or contingency provided for, felt almost indignant with her sister for the peace into which it seemed Monica had entered. She had been sorry for Monica—sorry and pitiful, and had done her best to look away and see nothing, while Dorrien was by; but now that he had been left behind, she did wish that her sister would wake up, tell her what had happened, and resume something of the mood with which she had started.

Obviously Monica had no intention of so doing. She could be—she was—a considerate, affectionate sister: she had been all that was required as a tender and devoted nurse during Isabel's illness, and she was prepared to take on herself the brunt of the future as soon as the future should create its own demand;—but my heroine had a spirit of her own all the same. There was a line beyond which Bell could never pass with Monica. Fret and fidget as she might, she durst not whine aloud when tacitly condemned to hold her peace.

At length she composed herself to sleep, and slept by fits and starts for the rest of the way.

Then Monica opened her eyes, and gazed out into the blank, chill night. There was not a moment of it in which she was not living through another scene, beholding, hearing, and feeling over and over again those looks, those touches, those trespasses which had awakened such a strange mingling of sensations, such a tumult of emotions within her bosom.

(To be continued.)

On Autographs.

III.

SOMEWHERE in Landor's works there is a couplet expressive of the fact that with each death of a friend something in ourselves dies too, 'and every death is painful save the last.'

It is a truth which a correspondence, extending more or less over a lifetime, cannot fail to emphasize. There are portions of each individuality which only possess a relative existence, and which, with the absence of that to which they correspond, necessarily cease to be. With the death of one associate boyhood is over; with that of another, youth, even though the date may seem to give the lie to the assertion. Whatever *anno Domini* may affirm, it is, in truth, only in relation to the old that we are ever young, and possibly, if the circumstances of the case admitted of the test, it would be found that it is only the presence of youth which causes years to take upon them the complexion of old age. Each separate attribute lives and dies together with its correlative; and thus we come back to Landor's assertion that with the departure, one by one, of a man's friends, he himself dies, as it were, by stages—something lost with each. It is a curious and interesting study, to those who have leisure to pursue it, to watch as the sun creeps westward the gradual shifting of the lights, to see that which was once shadow start into relief, and what was once bright become extinct, while yet the personality which underlies all changing relationships remains stable and unaltered.

As once more we turn over the pages we find the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster meeting, in the letter if not in the spirit, with Archdeacon Manning, the latter still at Lavington and sending a cordial invitation to his correspondent to visit him there. How much, one speculates, has in this instance, in obedience to the inexorable law of nature, died as the relationships of life have changed, and how much of Archdeacon Manning survives in his

representative, the Cardinal Archbishop? Nothing for nothing—the same law holds good in all the departments of life. Each phase is paid for by the relinquishment or death of the one which preceded it. Israel, indeed, inherits Canaan, but not the children to whom the promises were made. Yet the lots are fairly enough apportioned; one has hope as his share, the other fulfilment.

Leaving the Church, we find ourselves once more in a land of art. Dante Gabriel Rossetti has been set dreaming of a theatre ‘where not only the appointments of the stage but the whole decorations of the house should be in harmony with mediæval history and art,’ and where the scenic effects should correspond to the pictures of Henry Leys, the great Belgian painter, whose works are to the writer the most thoroughly great and satisfactory modern historical pictures he knows.

Possibly, before his death, he may have recognised indications, at least, of the future realisation of his ‘dream.’

Is it from a dreamer in another sphere that a letter comes not far distant in order from the one last quoted? For William O’Brien, writing from his prison in 1889, and dealing also in the first instance with art, though art in a different province from that of the painter, tells us that ‘the end of the strife’—*his* strife—‘is plainly near.’ A dream, perhaps, yet some of us might, with Clovis Hugues, the patriot poet of France, reply to the scoffers:

Vous cherchez les héros, je cherche les rêveurs,
 Vous croyez à des gens qu’on nomme les sauveurs;
 Je ne crois qu’à des fous amoureux de leur rêve,
 Et c’est à ces sauveurs, les seuls vrais, que j’élève
 Un hautain piédestal dans mes strophes.

But to pass on from the visions of painter and politician alike. We gave, in a former paper, some examples of the estimates formed by writers of their own work, or rather of their various attitudes with regard to it. It is not less instructive, when we can obtain an honest opinion on the subject, to observe the attitude of a man towards what, in a more intimate sense still, may no less be termed his work—towards himself, that is, his own life and career. Here there are obviously even greater difficulties in the way of obtaining a candid estimate. The fear of egoism keeps some men silent, whilst the announcements of those who are most ready to speak on the subject do not invariably carry their own guarantee of veracity. Paradoxical though it may sound, it is

perhaps from the inordinately vain that the most absolute candour is to be looked for, from men of so happy a temperament that what might have seemed to them blemishes in another take in their own case the character of interesting peculiarities, to be advertised rather than concealed. There is a light-hearted openness about the self-revelations of such persons, scarcely to be equalled by the painful sincerities of the humble. But, however that may be, it is not uninteresting when we light upon what seems to be a man's calm and dispassionate judgment of himself, and in the following letter from Henry Crabb Robinson there is a certain ring of sincerity which commends it:

'I am,' he says, writing in 1849, 'much obliged by your present, and embarrassed by your note. I know not what to say without exposing myself to the imputation of either affectation or insensibility to the compliment paid me.

'I own that such a note, had it been anonymous, would have annoyed me. Coming from you it gratifies me, but with an uncomfortable adjunct. It is the *a laudato* that alone renders it a matter of satisfaction to be the *laudatus*.

'I cannot but be proud of any mark of your respect, even if founded on a mistake. I was not the friend of Schiller, whom I saw only two or three times.

'Of Goethe I saw much more, and he was as superior to Schiller as Shakespeare was to Milton. I have often said of myself that it has been my enviable lot to be known, and, to a certain extent, respected, in several countries of Europe by distinguished men whom I had no right to associate with from the possession of any kindred talent. This ought to be said hereafter, if I were one to be ever mentioned hereafter. . . .—I am, your obliged, humble servant, H. C. ROBINSON.'

There is another letter from the same writer, but two years earlier, from Rydal Mount, and showing its poet in a somewhat mournful light:

'You will expect from me,' he says, 'some account of our friend's health and spirits. I have nothing clear and decisive to say. There is an evident indisposition, or you may call it incapacity, in Mr. W. to withdraw his mind from the sad subject on which it broods. He prefers solitude to company, and sits without speaking a word by the hour together. I have been very seldom able to make him give his mind even to the very exciting subject—the appointment of Dr. Hampden, and the now inevitable

forthcoming proceedings in some ecclesiastical court. Was it ignorance, or did he wish to obtain for the Dean and Chapter of H. the cheap glory of being willing to incur the perils of martyrdom, that induced Henry of Exeter to state that the refusal to elect according to the *recommendation* subjected them to a *præmunire*? . . .—Your obliged, etc., H. C. ROBINSON.'

The world changes. It no longer surprises the lay mind, as it evidently did that of Crabb Robinson, that the great poet, absorbed in domestic affliction, failed to find interest and distraction even in the exciting scenes of an ecclesiastical quarrel.

Another Lake poet follows on the foregoing melancholy account of Wordsworth, and Robert Southey addresses the actor Charles Young on the subject of a drama:

'Dear Sir,' he writes, ' . . . An intimate friend of mine has put a tragedy into my hands, asking my opinion whether he should publish it. He had not written it with any view to representation, but it has appeared to me so original, that I have advised him to offer it for the stage; and this I have done chiefly because I could not but feel throughout the perusal how much effect you, and none but you, could give to the principal character—which is one of moral heroism—calm, thoughtful, dignified, self-subdued. We have few characters in our drama so finely conceived or so well delineated.

'With this persuasion I have recommended him to submit it to your judgment; and if your opinion should accord with mine as to the conception and general merits of the piece, any alterations which might be necessary for adapting it for the stage might easily be made.

'I remain, dear Sir,

'Yours, with sincere respect,

'ROBERT SOUTHEY.'

The reply of the great actor is addressed to the dramatist himself:

'I have read with attention your play. I do not think, with all the high dramatic and poetic beauties which it in parts contains, that it would succeed in representation; and yet I could wish that you would, in the teeth of this opinion, offer it to Covent Garden Theatre. The managers and I have already differed upon similar occasions, and it is probable we should do so in your case. In the event of their accepting it, I hope it is

needless to assure you that I shall use the most strenuous efforts to make myself worthy of the trust that will then devolve upon me.

'I think Mr. Southey's good opinion of it of such high importance, that were I in your place I should on this single ground propose it to the theatre for representation. But that I would rather be taxed with lack of judgment than integrity, I should have adopted any course to avoid declaring a difference of opinion with *such a man* !

'I am, dear Sir,

'Your faithful servant,

'C. M. YOUNG.'

Here is the playwright's answer. He is twenty-seven years old, and the drama in question is his first effort :

'I am very much obliged to you,' he writes, 'for the attention you have given to my play. I shall not offer it to the theatre—for if the managers were bold enough to differ from you in opinion, certainly I should differ from them. And with regard to Mr. Southey's sentiments, I do not look upon them to have gone further than a belief that there were grounds for asking you to take the trouble of forming an opinion—and even if they had gone further I am pretty sure that he would consider your judgment upon such a question to be preferable to his own.'

The correspondence has been given entire, in order that critic, actor, and playwright might stand together. We now return to the alphabetical order and to Robert Southey.

It is perhaps in his lighter moods that the latter is most attractive—when nonsense (of which he declared himself so cordial and *bonâ fide* a lover) bubbles up from him with such spontaneous and exuberant merriment, and a grace so gay and so charming that it has rarely been surpassed. A man not born great may achieve greatness, but only the born jester should be licensed to make jokes, and to that class Southey belonged. But that it should have been so only serves to enhance the tragedy of his latter years. Glancing over the long series of his letters we watch the gathering of the darkness which enveloped the close of his life, and, recalling his description of himself,

A man he is by nature merry,
Somewhat tom-foolish, and comical, very—

we feel all the force of the contrast.

'Daylight seems no nearer,' he writes on one occasion; 'I used to take no thought for the morrow, and now my mind is far too busy with it—shaping plans for contingencies, and calculating means for meeting the expenses, the worst way in which wakeful hours can be employed.' And again he complains of the physical effects of sorrow—symptoms which foreshadow the end: 'I never used to feel that I had a head. . . . But I am as little able to forget that I have one on my shoulders now, as a man would be who was to have his *taken off* the next day. I have a constant dull aching . . . I lie down with it at night and rise with it in the morning.' And, added to domestic troubles, there is a shade of bitterness in his mention of the fact that, while no one commands a higher price for 'job work' than himself, his books and poems do not sell.

'A man he is by nature merry'—but circumstances have arrayed themselves against poor nature and defeated her. And so we take melancholy leave of Southey, passing on to another writer not unconnected with the Lake country.

The fashion in which men take their pleasures is in many cases more characteristic than that in which they set themselves to perform their tasks. Was it not Carlyle who found the inmates of some charitable educational establishment playing leap-frog—jumping over each other's backs in a very mournful manner? It was an aspect of their existence more significant than had they in like manner been surprised at their studies. And to catch a glimpse, not of the victims of philanthropic experiment, but of a philosopher, at play cannot fail to be interesting.

To those who were acquainted with his tastes it will be no surprise to find the grave biographer and champion of Bacon taking a serious interest in a game of croquet. The following letter from James Spedding is that of a man who, to whatever he set his hand, was accustomed to do it seriously, yet not without a humorous appreciation of the incongruity of the conditions into which he might be brought. 'What did you do all day?' he was once asked by a curious friend, on the occasion of his having consented, with his habitual readiness to take part in whatever was going forward, to join a water-party. 'I spent the time,' he replied, 'in wondering why the vessel was called a pleasure-boat.'

On the present occasion we find him indulging in reflections upon the irrevocableness of the past, illustrated by the lost chances and missed opportunities of a game of croquet!

'This letter,' he writes, 'ought to have gone to-day, but I was

summoned into the woods in pursuit of rabbits, and then to the moor in pursuit of grouse, and did not return till the post had gone. To prevent the same thing happening to-morrow, I am finishing it overnight' (it is dated past 1 A.M.). After proceeding to give an account of some reports of travels he has received from abroad, he goes on :

'I can never distinctly understand what it is in foreign countries that makes the sight, or smell, or hearing, or feeling of it worth so much trouble. But I daresay they are as pleasant in their way as other places—when you are there. I prefer the pleasure which is here—that is, where I am. It is true that even close to the door one has troubles. As for instance I cannot quite get over the recollection of an opportunity irrevocably lost of distinguishing myself at croquet. If I had had — to advise me, I certainly should have won the game. Here is the case.'

Then follows a diagram, elaborately drawn out, of the state of the ground.

'Black and blue,' he proceeds, 'are both rovers. Blue having played, lost. I am yellow. Pink—my partner—has been through the last hoop but two. I am at it. I hit pink. So far, well. Having hit it, I think it would be a great advantage if I could get through my hoop on my way to the enemy. I have only to roll pink a little beyond the hoop and myself into position, and then I shall be still better placed for the attack than I am now. I try, and see what follows.'

Another diagram, illustrative of failure.

'How well I see now that I ought to have gone at once within reach of black (next player), put him out, sent blue far away, gone back to pink, who played next, and might certainly have used me to make himself a rover, and left me in a position to finish the game next innings if blue did not hit one of us! And yet it can't be done now, because it is past and irrevocable!

'Yours affectionately,

'JAMES SPEDDING.'

Before passing on, we add a fragment of a letter without beginning or end, but of which the delicate handwriting, no less than internal evidence, proclaims it to be the expression of a very different mood on the part of the same writer. It is addressed to a musician.

'How do you find it in music,' he says, 'which I take to be your deepest taste? Does a sense of exceeding beauty enliven

your spirits, or does it seem rather to oppress them? I do not know why it should be; but the contemplation of a perfectly beautiful thing—whether a perfectly fine day, or Taglioni, or Coniston Waterhead, or one of Shakespeare's women—affects me (physically) very much like a fit of indigestion. It lays a weight upon my animal spirits like lead. As we went up the hill from Coniston—and it was this which made me think of asking you a question, not otherwise particularly appropriate to your peculiar soul—I could do nothing but break out every three minutes in a fragment of Charles Tennyson's, which broke out of him while wandering about the wolds of Lincolnshire in autumn, and which I always have recourse to on these occasions, being all I have to say,—

Ah, woody hills and autumn tints divine!
 Ah mournful eyes! ah sad poetic soul!
 Ah beauteous thoughts, with fatal sorrows trained!
 To twine for ever round this cumbered heart.'

'Or Taglioni!' On the opposite page—forty years between—lies a valentine presented by a gentle, courteous old dancing mistress, whose friendly grace has charmed the heart of the awkward school-girl pupils, whom, week by week, she instructs at a watering-place boarding-school. 'De loin n'allez pas m'oublier' is the inscription borne by the 'souvenir,' and the name written, in the trembling characters of old age, under the gay painted flowers—pansies and forget-me-nots—is that of Marie Taglioni. The souvenir of the brave and patient woman in those later years when life had defrauded her of her well-earned rest, forms the mournful sequel to that other souvenir contained in the letter in which the brilliant artist takes rank with Shakespeare's women and Coniston Waterhead as an embodiment of perfect beauty. 'De loin n'allez pas m'oublier,' and though far, very far, off, she is not yet forgotten.

There was another art, more important than that of croquet, in which James Spedding was an adept. If the art of letter-writing is extinct—and who can deny it?—there is another and a kindred one which has not been allowed to suffer the like neglect. The most searching test of style, it has been said, lies in a telegram, but, short of this, few accomplishments are so difficult to bring to perfection as that of note-writing. To be brief without being curt; terse without incivility; to say nothing gracefully when there is nothing to be said; to say with originality what has been said a hundred times already; and, above all, to accomplish this without any appearance of labour or effort, is no easy

matter. It has been observed that time is required in order to be short, and a perfect note is as rare as a perfect sonnet. But there have been not a few artists, in older as well as later times, who have not grudged the sacrifice of care and thought to this special branch of their art, and, among them, James Spedding was a conspicuous example. Take, for instance, the following note. It is the answer to a reproach for the coldness of a previous signature :

‘Then you may expect me to dinner on Wednesday,’ he writes, ‘when I hope that we shall find—you, that truth does not exclude affection, and I, that affection is not incompatible with truth ; and that I am not less affectionately, because very truly,

‘JAMES SPEDDING.’

We add another example from a different pen. In this case, the occasion of the note is the introduction by the writer of a candidate, Mr. —, for a seat in Parliament, and it might serve as a model of ingenious caution :

‘I never know exactly,’ says the writer to his correspondent, ‘on what side you are in politics. I rather think that you have the political opinions of all sensible people. So has Mr. —.’

And here, lastly, is a note from Mrs. Norton, as tragic as her life itself, though it is only ‘an invitation to dinner’ :

‘Will you dine here on Sunday at half-past seven? If you cannot dine, look in in the evening. I do not think I can “receive” again. I thought I was fond of my friends, but I find I am not. I feel very much worried when they are here, and very much out of spirits when they are gone. I wish to amuse myself and I cannot. I try to enjoy all this liberty of doing as I please, but it is of as much use to me as a kite to a child whose holiday is without a breeze to fly it. I wish it were all over, and that people were discussing what I *was*.

‘This is an invitation to dinner, so answer it.

‘Yours very truly,
‘C. N.’

Among the many accomplishments of which the writer was mistress, we feel as we turn over her letters, gay though they often are, that that of making the best of it was not included. Possibly she disdained the homely manufacture, for a manufacture it remains, and one apt enough, when all is done, to lack the grace of a spontaneous growth. Yet it is well to recognise that, when life becomes bankrupt, she is commonly accustomed to offer

a dividend which, since nothing better is to be had, those who are wise will not refuse to accept. But Mrs. Norton, we imagine, thought otherwise.

And so we leave the notes, and, returning to the letters, find among them a specimen, in the handwriting of Mr. Thackeray, of yet another art, and one, too, not wholly unconnected with that of making the best of it. For it is an apology.

Never, under any circumstances, to make an apology, is advice that in a general way may be acknowledged to be sound enough, human nature, to its shame, being prone to draw from it the ungenerous conclusion that the fault committed must be unusually heinous, since it has brought the culprit to his knees. An apology has, in fact, an unhappy tendency to emphasize the offence for which it is meant to atone, and even if forgiveness is accorded it is probable that forgetfulness—from a human point of view more desirable still—may be further off than ever. Apologies are, to be candid, apt to be disagreeable alike, and in almost equal measure, to both parties concerned. Granted that to confess a fault and to express contrition for it is good for the soul, it by no means follows that the process is not eminently distasteful not only to the penitent—which may be fair enough—but also to the injured party, who finds himself, without warning or consent, placed in a position which it is not only difficult to fill with grace or dignity, but in which he is, as it were, seized by the throat and required, on the shortest notice, either to exercise the Christian virtue of forgiveness or, by refusing to do so, to place himself distinctly in the wrong. It is, in many cases, a choice of evils, and the sense of the unfair advantage at which he has been taken may not unnaturally acerbate his sentiment towards the offender, even while he yields so far to the necessities of the case as to give his formal assent to the liquidation of the offence. But there are exceptions to every rule, and some of us would consider it almost worth while to commit a fault, could we hope to offer an apology like Mr. Thackeray's.

A few words are needed in explanation of the circumstances under which it was made. A party had been assembled at a country house, of which Thackeray had made one, and of which he had afterwards communicated a humorous account to a comic paper. The letter tells the rest of the story :

‘ In Mr. Dickens’s story that is coming out,’ he writes, ‘ there is a certain Mr. Micawber addicted to getting into debt, and

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signing his name to bills of exchange, and who, whenever he signs his name to a bill, says, "Thank God that bill is settled." When I find I have done wrong, like Mr. Micawber I'm at least very eager to sign an apology.

'It is only about four hours since I found that I owed one to you. I have long been aware, by the reports of some friends, the estrangement of others, and the demeanour of some acquaintances, that a certain article of my writing had given great offence; but as I meant it in the most good-humoured spirit, and was actually proud of the absurd composition, I would not acknowledge that anybody had a right to be offended, and was quite indignant and angry that any one else should be so, and a few hours since I should have thought an apology a thing impossible, and that *I* was the injured party, and the innocent victim of a little social persecution.

'But just before I came to the railroad I was referred to the unlucky paper in question by a friend of mine who is not likely to be a very willing judge against me, and then, and not till then, I saw that I had been wrong. I meant no wrong as I say again. I write in a headlong way often as I speak, and I own and acknowledge now that — had cause of offence in that article, and I ask your forgiveness. It has done no wrong certainly; nobody, not fifty people at least, know what or who was meant, but I had no right to speak of — in that manner, and perfectly feel that the anger of —'s friends is justifiable.

'And having debated the subject in my mind during my railroad journey, and come to the conclusion of the rest of the world against myself that I have been guilty of a rudeness, I write an early and hasty line to you to express my contrition that I should have given you pain.

'Believe me, dear sir,

'Your very faithful servant,

'W. M. THACKERAY.'

'I shall stay here till over Saturday, and shall be very glad to learn that you forgive me.'

An assurance which, we need scarcely say, he received in terms as free and full as his own: 'I believe,' his correspondent adds, 'that past proceeding of yours to have been as free from any ill intention as this present is full of frankness and generosity.'

And so the matter ends, and the writers have alike shown that it is possible to make and to receive an apology in a fashion that shall leave no sting behind.

A fragment of a letter from Wordsworth follows, bearing no more definite date than that of 'Friday morning,' and written in a tone of subdued sadness, which recalls Mr. Crabb Robinson's description. He feels it would be expedient for him to move from home, yet—

'I seem fastened to the spot—everything about me is so soothing and beautiful. Before I had this little attack of something like rheumatism I talked big about going as far as the Pyrenees, and now I am afraid of the rough road of Kirkstone and Patterdale. I mean in a carriage, for I could walk on foot from morning to night without injury or fatigue. . . . Kate Southey is with us. We talk much about her father's letters, and I, who cannot be long in this world, am much grieved that there is no prospect of their being collected, and a selection of them published. . . .'

Later on, in the same letter, he mentions a guest from whom he had received a visit, adding a comment which, considering by whom it was made, is somewhat curious :

'His manner is very much against him ; but to me, who have read so little, his conversation is both instructive and entertaining.

'Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.'

This last letter, like many others, serves to recall a somewhat melancholy feature, common indeed in their measure to all collections of letters, but perhaps more marked in such a one as the present than in those where the selection has been made with greater regard to practical importance and permanent weight. It matters little to the world whether those who have left it were ill or well, strong or weak, so that their day's work was done, the rent exacted for their tenancy paid ; yet the fact that the subject of health is so recurrent, so rarely entirely absent, is not without its significance, though we have no space to do more than call attention to it in passing. It is the same with all—old and young, those to whom sickness had become a habit of life, those to whom it was only a casual and unwelcome experience ; it is the sombre thread which runs through the many-coloured tapestry, now lighter, now darker in hue, but rarely altogether out of sight. Barry Cornwall is 'staggering down hill' ; John

Sterling's 'infirm health' clogs his movements; Mill is hastening abroad for the sake of his health. Gifford is 'slowly but, thank God, gradually recovering' from an attack of illness which has delayed for six weeks the appearance of his Review. There is no need to multiply instances. It is the one universal note, giving singular and painful emphasis to Sir Thomas Browne's assertion that the world is, after all, nothing but a hospital, and a hospital moreover for incurables.

'For the world,' he says—the quotation is from memory—'I take it, is not an Inn but a Hospital, and a place not to live but to die in.' Unless, indeed, we prefer to call it the waiting-room of the great physician, who to by far the larger number of those represented in these pages has already applied his infallible cure.

The end of the alphabet is almost reached. Those who have in turn stood for its letters have shown themselves in phases many and various, but under one aspect we have seldom caught sight of them. It is a noticeable fact that of anger, at least as directed against the correspondent to whom the mass of the letters are addressed, there is no record. If such existed it has been obliterated. The omission has its obvious advantages; but, nevertheless, anger is unfortunately so characteristic a phase of human nature that, without some expression of it, such a register as this of the varying humours of mankind remains incomplete. Lying among the rest, though not belonging to them, there is a paper which supplies this deficiency. The expression of concentrated indignation on the part of the Duke of Wellington may make up for the lack of display of temper on that of lesser men. The letter, dated May 6, 1824, after mentioning the subject with which it deals—viz. the interference of a certain Sir Henry Warde in the affairs of the Leeward Islands—proceeds thus:

'This interference has been made at the suggestion of Lieut. Col. Sir Charles Smith, who is certainly as *loose* a fellow and one as little fitted for a counsellor as any I know in the Service.

'Only last year he thought proper to take upon himself to upset everything submitted to Parliament in Estimates, which had, by the by, been made out by himself, and I enclose the minute which I wrote upon his conduct.

'I don't really wish to have anything to say to the W. Indies or any foreign settlement. If it is thought that the Governors

and General Officers on the spot, contrary to all precedence and practice, are the fittest persons to be entrusted with the management of the concerns heretofore transacted by or lately made over to the Ordnance, I have not the smallest objection, and will make over to them the whole concern. But if the business is to be carried on by the Ordnance, the Governors and General Officers must be brought to their Senses, or I must proceed in a manner which will certainly settle all these little questions, but which will be very disagreeable to me and to the present officers on the spot.

‘Ever yours most sincerely,

‘WELLINGTON.’

One more letter and we come to an end ; and, as is fitting, the writer of this last, as of the first, is an artist. For while statesmen and philosophers, men of science and soldiers, have all their place in the collection of papers with which we have been concerned, it is, after all, art—art in its truest and widest sense—which is its pervading and dominant feature ; it is the artist who is, so to speak, at home there. Others pass across the stage, eminent and noticeable figures, but they are to some degree foreigners, and even they have for the most part caught and reflect the prevailing tone. Like those who enter a mosque, they take off their shoes, soiled with the dust of the streets, outside, and become for the time participators in the general atmosphere. Lord Aberdeen—the Lord Aberdeen of 1836—presses on his correspondent a subject for a drama, and Mr. Gladstone occupies himself with the education of a budding poet. Such being the case, it is peculiarly appropriate that it is by an artist—the greatest of living painters—that the last word should be spoken, and that the subject with which he deals should be art. The letter is from G. F. Watts, and, written in 1859, bears the signature by which he is best known to those honoured with his friendship.

‘I am somewhat late,’ he says, ‘in returning my acknowledgments to you for your letter, because I am very much occupied by my fresco, and writing is to me at all times an effort I am but too much inclined to defer.

‘A thousand thanks, for I know you intended to afford me gratification. I neither affect nor desire to be indifferent to praise, for it would be no advantage to arrive at that unsympathetic state which could render one careless about sympathy. Criticism is indeed unpalatable to me, as it can only tell me what

I so well know already, and do not require to be told, as I would remedy the matter if I could.

‘I have plenty of ambition and ardently desire to be useful in my generation, but I would prefer working silently and unnoticed, save by that amount of encouragement that would cheer my efforts when well directed and for the sake of their direction alone. To produce great things, one ought to be intent only upon doing one’s utmost, and never stop to consider whether the thing be great or little in the abstract; the really great is so far beyond one’s reach, that comparison becomes an unworthy consideration. To work with all one’s heart, but with all singleness of heart, is the right thing, and whoso does this may feel satisfied, whatever the result of his labours may be. I in this instance would feel satisfied if I had been able to do my best, but many circumstances—want of health foremost amongst them—have prevented me from doing my best, so I cannot be contented. The utmost I can hope is that my work will not be a disgrace, and my hope is founded upon a steady rejection of small effects. If I have shown the way to better things, I shall be very well contented; but I neither expect nor desire that my work may be considered a great one. . . .

‘Saying so much upon the subject will probably look very like vanity, and I confess that I feel conscious of some worth and that I do like to be estimated justly; but my pride is more hurt by over-estimation than by want of appreciation, and I am really humiliated by praise which is only due to perfect success. . . .

‘Believe me to be, yours most sincerely,

‘SIGNOR.’

And so the end is reached. The last pages are refolded, the last sheets laid away. The brief glimpses which have been afforded of the lives and moods, lasting or transient, trivial or deep, of the men and women of yesterday, of to-day, and—may we add?—of to-morrow, are over. The records are once more laid aside of successes which, from the standpoint now reached, are perceived to have been, after all, failures; of failures which have received the tardy crown of success; of judgments reversed and decrees set aside. They, and all such, form the bequest which the present will soon make to the future, to become, subject to the general law which transforms the relics treasured by one generation in its shrines into the curiosities stored by the next in its museums, something possibly ‘rich and strange,’ but not what

they are to us who handle them now. It is thus that we have dealt with other men's treasures; it is thus they will in their turn deal with ours. But when all is said and done we will not complain or lament over that past which is lost or that present which is soon to follow it.

'Where are the snows of yester-year?' Truly they are gone, but the flowers they covered flourish and the buds they protected bloom.

I. A. TAYLOR.

A Kiss.

I ASKED of one whom I loved full well,
 'There is just one thing I would have you tell:
 'Tis strange to ask, but the thing is this,
 What is the good or the ill of a kiss?'

'It should be,' she answered, 'a sacred sign
 Of a love that can follow the Great Design;
 But e'en now to the devil your soul you may sell,
 And a kiss may lead to heaven—or hell.'

'You are right,' I cried; 'it may lead to bliss
 Or may be too like to the Traitor's Kiss.
 So I learn your lesson. In direst drouth
 No kisses of mine shall touch your mouth.'

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

The Blue Rose.

‘YES, your grandfather he was one o’ the old sort—honest as the day, as the sayin’ is, an’ well brought up, if he wasn’t allus easy to live with—an’ that set on the truth, an’ that pertickler—well, if it ‘adn’t a bin for ‘im bein’ that pertickler, you gells would a ‘ad a red-aired woman to your granny instead o’ me.’

A smile went round the tea-table; Mrs. Minver’s grandchildren nodded, and looked at me—you know the look when there’s a story in the air and you’re expected to ask for it. But I was too shy. It was my first visit to Myrtle Cottage. Lottie Minver and I were both serving our time with Miss Ellends (*Modes et Robes*), and I was only sixteen then.

‘A red-aired woman,’ Mrs. Minver went on, ‘an’ that would a’ been a pity on all accounts, for ‘e was a fine man as ever I see, an’ me bein’ no slip of a chit—is sons all measured over their six foot—an’ all bin measured too——’

She sighed, and looked out through the open door at the narrow strip of back garden where scarlet runners and stocks and reluctant sunflowers had been coaxed to grow. We were having tea in the kitchen. The table was covered with brown oilcloth. The cups were white with mauve spots. We had cresses for tea, and winkles, because it was Sunday.

‘A fine man ‘e was to be sure,’ she went on. ‘That’s ‘is portrait as ‘angs to the right o’ the parlour chimley piece, just over the crockery lamb yer Aunt Eliza give me the very last fair day afore the Lord took ‘er. A fine figure of a man he was, my dears, an’ much sought after, but mighty pertickler. An’ so ‘e married me.’

Mrs. Minver smoothed her black alpaca apron complacently.

‘What was it about the red-haired young lady?’ I asked.

‘Ah! that’s a tale, an’ it just shows ‘ow careful a gell should be when she’s courtin’.’

This sounded interesting.

'Do tell us the tale,' I urged.

'Oh! it's nothin' much to tell,' said Mrs. Minver, but she settled herself against the cushions of her Windsor chair and stroked her left mitten with her right hand, in a way that promised.

'Come, granny, tell Lily about the blue roses.'

'Old yer tongue then, till I can get a word in hedgeways! Blue roses indeed! Spoilin' a story afore it's begun! Well, you must know, young lady, as I was brought up in the country—a reg'lar Kentish apple I was, my man useter say. Our home was in Kent, down among the cherry orchards. We 'ad a nice little orchard oursel's, an' our house it was a wooden 'ouse, all built o' boards-like, not bricks like you see 'em 'ere. An' there was a big pear-tree, as went all up one side of the house—one branch right and one left—even-like, for all the world like a ladder. We useter pick the pears outer our bedroom winder, me and my cousin Hetty did. Jargonels they was, an' a sight sweeter than any as goes to market now-a-days.

'Our garden it wasn't much of a one for size, but for flowers—there! it was a perfect moral—cram full it was—all sorts—pinks an' pansies an' lilies, roses, jassermine, an' sweet willies, an' wall-flowers an' daffies and spring flowers, which is my favourites outer all the flowers.'

'What are spring flowers?'

'They're a reg'lar old-fashioned flower—gels used allus to have 'em in their gardens long afore you was thought of, nor me neither. Like wallflowers they be, summat, only pink an' yeller, an' only one on a stalk, an' soft like velvet, an' smelling like honey they did. I haven't seen none o' them since I come to live in Bermondsey.

'Well, our little wooden 'ouse it stood on the hill, an' as you come up, whether 'twas by the road, as was white an' windin', or whether 'twas by the shorter way through the medders an' the hop-garden, the first you see of our 'ouse was the white rose-tree. It clomb all over the side of the 'ouse—not the side where the pear-tree was, but the other—there was no windows that side the house—and the rose clomb all along—and blow! it did blow that rose did. Pearl-white the roses was, or what you might call blush-pink, and hundreds of 'em. It was quite a pieter. Well, one fine summer every rose as come on that tree wasn't white nor blush-pink any more, but *blue*—a darkish blue at the edges and

paler to the middles. Not pretty? Well, p'raps not; but I tell you there never was such a fuss made over any rose as you'd call pretty as there was over that blue rose. Parson, he was always comin' down to see it, an' bringin' his friends, from London sometimes; an' the gentry they drove in their carriages to see our blue rose; an' the tradesmen an' grocers they come in their carts from far an' near, an' they said, "Well, it was a novelty."

'An' they said it would surely take the prize at the flower-show. But it was Hetty's rose-bush. Father 'd give it her when first she come to live with us. She come quite little, and she cried at the strange place, an' all she took to was the white roses. So father he give her the bush—an' next year father 'e died—about cherry time it was.

'So when they said that about the prize, Hetty said she didn't care about prizes an' flower-shows an' things. It was quite enough to 'ave such a rose-tree for 'er very own.

'The next year the roses come blue again, an' everyone come more 'n ever to look, an' the grocers an' people with carts they come from far an' near, for they said it was a novelty.

'But mother, she was rather quiet-like, an' she didn't say much about the roses; an' one day when she an' me was makin' up the bread—just our two selves, in the back kitchen—she says to me—

"Addie," she says (my name's Adelaide), "about them blue roses now. If it wasn't that I don't like to think o' a child o' mine bein' up to such tricks, I should say as you or Hetty had been a' borrowed o' my blue-bag."

"Your blue-bag, mother!" says I. Hard work I had to keep my face, for Hetty she was a makin' faces at me through the winder.

"Yes, my blue-bag," mother says, lookin' at me very straight.

"Why, aunt," says Hetty through the window, "if it was the blue-bag, how would all the roses be the same? An' wouldn't it all wash off in the rain? An' you know it's always brighter after a shower," she says. "Besides, would we do such a silly thing if we could, an' keep it up so, an' all? We might do it onst or twice," says she.

"There's summat in all that," says my mother, going on with the bread. "I misdoubt me it's age turns the roses blue, like it turns folks' hair white. The rose was allus a pearly white or what you might call a blush-pink afore."

'An' the grocers an' people with carts they come from far an' near to see the rose-tree, for it was a novelty, ye see.

'Says I to Hetty that night after I'd said my prayers an' read my chapter—for I was allus properly brought up—"Hetty," I says, "fancy mother saying that about the blue-bag!"

"Yes, fancy!" says Hetty, laughin'—an' she snuffs out the candle with 'er fingers an' jumps into bed. "I ain't agoin' to 'ave my blue roses run down neither. Why, I'm a-goin' to take the prize at the flower-show—I am, with my wonderful blue roses!"

'An' sure enough she told Parson the very next day as she would try for the prize at the flower-show.

'It was just about that time she took up with George Winstead. Yes, 'im as come to be your gran'father instead, an' is lyin' in his grave at Long Malling this twenty good years. Well, they kep' company together, an' everyone was willin', for he was a godly young man an' taught in Sunday-school, an' had good hopes of his uncle's business, which it was a cornchandler's in Medstone, an' she was a well-lookin' girl enough for all her red hair, which was made fun of then, though I hear it's all the rage now-a-days. I never see a girl so took up with a chap as she was with him. She give up curlin' 'er 'air acause he liked it plain, and she took to readin' the Bible and sayin' her prayers (like I'd allus done, and she'd allus laughed at me afore for it). Why, I've seen her kneel there over 'alf an hour, and then get outer bed again when she thought I was asleep and kneel down on the bare boards by the winder an' cry an' pray an' say, "George, George," an' pray again, not out loud, but so as I could 'ear 'er. Not proper prayers she didn't say like people gets taught, but things outer 'er own 'ead, an' the same things over an' over, till I useter say—

"Come along ter bed, Hetty, do, for gracious sakes. You'll catch your death o' cold on them boards, an' I'm a-droppin' with sleep."

'Well, as flower-show day come nearer an' nearer, she grew stupider an' stupider, an' more an' more given to prayin', an' used to be all for goin' off by herself and leavin' everything to me—even to makin' our dresses for the flower-show an' lookin' after them roses what was to take the prize. I did it all, a' course—I was allus called a good-natured girl—an' the dresses they looked lovely, an' the roses was bluer than ever, instead o' being a pearly white or a blush-pink, like they should ha' been by rights. An' Hetty she prayed an' cried o' nights till I wonder I

ever got a wink o' sleep, an' of a day she'd laugh till she nearly cried again. Well, flower-show day come, an' we 'ad our new sprigged prints—gowns was wore short in the waist then—an' Hetty she looked like a ghost in hers, but they did say mine became me wonderful.

'It was a beautiful day I remember, very sunny an' bright, an' you was glad to walk the shady side o' the way that day, I can tell you. Very hot it was in the big barn where the flower-show was. 'Twas all done up fine with flags an' wreaths an' all sorts, an' it was that hot the flowers was most wilted afore it come time for the prizes. An' every one was wipin' their faces with their 'andkerchers, an' saying there hadn't been such a day this twenty year.

'When it come time for the prizes we was all settin' on forms packed close like herr'ns. Mother was there of course, an' George an' his friends, an' Hetty sat nexter me, an' George—that's your gran'father—was settin' the other side of her. An' she kep' edgin' away from him an' getten' close to me, an' crushin' my new print, not to mention 'er own, an' she kep' on 'oldin' my 'and that tight I didn't know 'ow to bear myself, an' I never see a bonnet with pink ribbons look worse on any young woman than it did on her. Mine always suited me. I 'ad it done up with blue the year I was married.

'Presently it come to roses. The barn was full—all the gentry an' the parson an' his friends an' the grocers an' people with carts 'ad come from far an' near.

'Well, the gentleman what was giving out who had got prizes, he takes up the bunch o' blue roses (I'd done 'em up nicely with a white ribbon, for Hetty was in one of her queer fits an' wouldn't touch 'em), an' he says—

"Hetty Martin——"

'Hetty jumped on her feet. I *felt* what she was a-goin' to do, an' I tried to hold her down, but no. She shook her arm clear o' me, an' she called out in a kind o' sharp shrieky voice as you could a' heard a mile off—

"Don't you go for to give *me* no prizes," she says. "It's all a lie—them roses is made up blue. Aunt she just hit it—it *was* the blue-bag. I never meant to tell, but I can't a-bear it. I made 'em up blue—an' I done it myself, an' I don't care who knows it. There!"

'Yes, my dears—well may you look! She spoke up like that—she did indeed—afore all that barnful! I never see such a gell.

Why, I wouldn't never even a' thought o' such a thing, let 'lone doin' it. Disgraceful, I call it—a gell puttin' 'erself forward afore folks like that!

'You could a' heard a pin drop, as the sayin' is, the place was that quiet, for full 'arf a minute. My 'eart was in my mouth, and for that 'arf minute I didn't know what she'd say next.

'The silly gell! Why, two whole summers we'd blued them roses, an' no one never know'd, an' no one wouldn't never a' known. We useter do it of a mornin' early afore mother come down. Hetty an' me we useter creep down in our stocking feet, so's not to make a clutter, an' afore we raked out the fire or opened the house we'd run round to the rose-tree an' look if there was any more buds out; an' Hetty 'ud say, "Here's another, Addie," an' I'd say, "All right, Hetty, we'll 'ave 'im," an' I'd rub the blue-bag round it once or twice, an' when it rained the blue soaked in more, an' the wet would seem to take it right into the roses' hearts. An' as the rose opened it would be all blue—from us having blued the edges. An' to think we might a' gone on an' on, an' took all the prizes at the flower-shows! I hate a fool.

'Well, that day in the barn it lasted—that kinder quiet like as if we was in church—it lasted for full 'arf a minute, an' it seemed like twenty—an' then there come a buzz, buzz, like a whole bench o' bees when a boy throws an apple at 'em—an' Hetty she says, "*Oh!*" quite soft and frightened-like—as well she might be—an' then, afore anyone could say a word to 'er, she was off, through the big barn door, like a rabbit with the dogs arter it.

'The ole gentleman what give the prizes, he said he'd know'd it all along—but 'e 'adn't, for he'd drove over in his own carriage to see our blue roses, and called them "curious nateral pheno—" suthin' or other.'

'And Hetty didn't tell of *you*, Mrs. Minver?'

'Oh! no, my dear. With all her faults, Hetty was never *that* sort o' girl.'

'And Mr. George?'

'Oh! he come up that arternoon—I see him from our window by the pear-tree—and Hetty she says—

"'I'm agoin' inter the orchard," she says; "if 'e wants me—but I don't think 'e will want me," says she.

'He did want her though, an' he says to me—

"'You come along, Addie, an' hear what I've got to say."

'We went out inter the cherry-orchard—all the cherries was

gathered though—an' Hetty was there, walkin' up and down like a ferret as wants to get out of its hutch an' can't. An' George he says—

"'Lookee here, Hetty," he says, "I don't wish no ill-feelin', but you'll see it's best for us to part. I'm sure, if you set any store by me, you wouldn't wish me to keep company with a gell as could act a livin' lie, as Parson says. An' I'm sure the Lord wouldn't grant a blessin', an' I wish you well an' good-bye."

'I never see a gell look so plain—for a rather good-looking gell—as Hetty did then, for her eyes was all red an' swelled up with cryin', an' she twisted her nose and mouth up, like as if she was a-goin' to begin again.

"'Good-bye, George," says she. "No, I wouldn't wish it, George," she says, "not if you don't, dear George."

'An' with that she walked away very quiet, an' George, he stood quite still, not looking at anythin' for a minute or two, an' then he give a sorter shrug an' a sorter sigh, an' he went off by the lower gate without as much as a "Good-day to you."

'When tea-time come, mother she says—

"'Enough said about a bit o' gell's nonsense;" an' she ups the stairs to Hetty, and she says at the door—

"'Come down to tea, my gell."

'An' Hetty she says—

"'Don't want no tea, aunt."

'An' mother she goes in, an' there's Hetty lyin' face down on the bed, an' mother she says—

"'Come, child, it's no use a-grislin' over spilt milk; an' arter all—

'A fault 'at's owned
Is 'arf atoned.'

Come along down, an' let's say no more about it."

'But Hetty she says (I was atop o' the stairs an' I heard her)—

"'It ain't no use, aunt," she says, "an' you've been's good's a mother to me, an' I thank you an' I loves you—that I do. But nothin's no good now. You let me be, there's a dear auntie."

'An' mother she left her, just a sayin'—

"'Don't you take on 'bout George, now. He'll come round."

'An' next mornin' when I woke up Hetty was gone, and we never seed her again.'

'Gone? Where to?' I asked.

'To Medstone first, an' then to London; an' mother couldn't never 'ear what come of 'er—but I did 'ear she come to no good.'

'And George?'

'Well, George he took on for a bit, an' didn't take to his victuals as a young man should; but I allus spoke him civil, an' when we was alone I said, "Pore George!" an' "Wasn't it hard when you was fond of a person to have 'em own up a liar quite shameless afore parson an' all!" An' he said, "Yes, 'twas cruel hard." An' next year we was married, George an' me.'

'And I suppose you never told him you had helped to blue the roses?'

'My dear! Now how could I? an' him that pertickler!'

E. NESBIT.

A New Port for Mexico.

FOR a great many years Vera Cruz has been the principal port of Mexico. And it is not too much to say that for a great many years Vera Cruz, as a port, has sufficed. But the Mexico of to-day is not the Mexico of the last many years, and has possibilities of which no one can fix the limit. Vera Cruz is inadequate even to-day, and it will be yet more inadequate in the near future.

The principal wealth of the Mexico of to-day is in her mines, chiefly of silver and lead, which are distributed all over her sierras, and to obtain an adequate and convenient outlet for their produce is her most immediate concern. The Congress of the U.S.A. in its wisdom has passed an enactment imposing upon the importation of the ores in which lead predominates over silver such heavy duties as amount practically to prohibition, and the most direct consequence of this provision is the erection of big smelting-works in Mexico itself for dealing with those ores which, before the passing of the Bill, found their way across the frontier to be treated in the smelting-works of the States. The coke requisite for the working of this smelting machinery has become an import of consideration, for none of it has as yet been forthcoming in the country, and, in addition, it has become of primary importance to Mexico that she should be able to find some convenient transport and export for the precious material which the smelting produces.

In addition to this, there is an enormous quantity of land in Mexico as yet practically uncultivated, which is of the greatest imaginable fertility, potentially productive of all sorts of valuable crops, from tobacco, coffee, cotton, and sugar-cane, to cereals and pasture. But in order that this fertility, when turned to account, as assuredly it soon will be, may have its true commercial value, it is requisite that the country be supplied with tolerable means of transport. In how many directions this transport is being provided it is not necessary to point out, for any railway map of

the country will show the tracks that everywhere are being opened. But all these means of land-transport are comparatively of little avail if fair means of transport come to a standstill as soon as the coast is reached.

Now Vera Cruz, as we have said above, has for years been the one port of any consideration upon the Gulf. And Vera Cruz as a harbour leaves very much to be desired. In point of fact, it is not a harbour at all. The peculiar scourge to which, as a resort of shipping, the Mexican Gulf is liable is a constantly-recurring hurricane from the north—a storm known locally as ‘*Norther*.’ The intervals at which the *Norther* occurs are uncertain. Two or three in a month, lasting some twenty-four hours each, appear to be the average. Lately, however, a *Norther* blew continuously for seventeen days, and at the end of that time was followed up, at Vera Cruz, by a visitation of yellow fever in the months of November and December—a condition of things very nearly unprecedented. Indeed, in this winter of 1890-91, it seems to have been the universal rule that nothing should happen except the unprecedented. Previously, for some four years, Vera Cruz had been exceptionally free from yellow fever, though its general character in relation to this epidemic does not stand high.

But the crying sin of Vera Cruz is that the open roadsteads in which the ships have to lie offer no adequate protection against these ‘*Northers*.’ The ‘*Northers*’ vary in intensity, no less than in the periods of their recurrence. A recent ‘*Norther*’ was estimated by the head engineer in charge of the harbour works at Tampico at no less than seventy miles per hour of wind-force—the recognised speed of a hurricane being sixty miles per hour. This is an exceptional rate of speed, but at all times a ‘*Norther*’ is a thing much dreaded by all who carry on their business in these waters. Now the roadstead at Vera Cruz has not even the common merit of a roadstead of being a roomy place, with fair depth of water in which it is possible for vessels to make what shift they can for themselves. On the contrary, the water is shallow, and the ships cramped together in a manner to make each of them a solid danger to the rest. In a recent instance a chance, little short of providential, alone saved one vessel from being the cause of shipwreck of innumerable others. It was an English vessel, moored on the north side of the roadstead, and it was soon apparent to the anxious watchers on shore that she was dragging her anchors. Directly in her path lay a German vessel, whose anchors were holding firm, and to leeward again of the latter lay

the *William Cliff*, a ship engaged in the coasting service. If the English ship continued to drag her anchors nothing could save her drifting upon the German vessel, which would then infallibly be borne away upon the *William Cliff*, and the three must then sweep the harbour, creating wholesale shipwreck. Mercifully the big solid buoy to which the French ships are moored when in Vera Cruz lay in her path. By some marvellous accident one of her anchors caught in the cable of this buoy, to which no ship was moored at the time, and there held firm, thus saving a very large proportion of the shipping in the harbour from what appeared almost certain destruction. And this is but one instance out of many illustrative of the risks of Vera Cruz harbour in one of these very frequent Northers.

A little way northward along the coast a noble river, the Panuco, debouches into the sea, flowing past the little town of Tampico, some nine miles from its outlet. Down this river flows a volume of water greater, as the engineer in charge of the harbour works shortly to be described assured us, than that of the southern branch of the Mississippi, which flows out past New Orleans. The Mississippi is, of course, by far the grander river, but it divides near the mouth into many channels.

The Panuco River is navigable for vessels of heavy tonnage, not only for those nine miles up to Tampico, but many miles higher up again; only, right across its mouth, stretches a sandbank which hitherto has practically debarred large vessels from all access to it. About seven or eight feet (there is little tide in the gulf) was the greatest depth of water which could be found upon it.

It is by the virtual doing away with this sandbar that a new port—a far better port than any it has yet had—is to be opened upon the Mexican Gulf.

The broad principle on which the work of doing away with the sandbar consists is the dredging and deepening of the channel. But since no amount of dredging can be of permanent use so long as the relative conditions of the littoral and river currents remain the same, the attempt is being made to change the relative conditions of these currents by throwing out jetties, nearly parallel to one another, from either side of the river mouth. The length of each jetty, when complete, will be 5,000 feet, and it is proposed to leave at the outlet a space between them of 1,000 feet. At the time of the writer's visit some 4,000 feet of the north jetty has been completed, and somewhat less of the south jetty.

We have said that 'an attempt' is being made to change the relative conditions of the littoral and river currents, but if it be right to use the word 'attempt' at all, it should in justice be said that it is an attempt which has at its back every scientific reason and all the teaching of experience to inspire belief in its success. The chief engineer of the works has had the benefit of extensive experience of curiously similar work under curiously similar conditions upon the Mississippi, and the resident engineer, who more immediately directs the operations, has had schooling in all sorts of harbour engineering. The system upon which the jetties are being constructed has been well and often tried, and the engineers speak without the very smallest misgiving of the certainty of success.

The formation of the jetties is, roughly speaking, of mattresses of brushwood, serving as the bed of great stones. A line of rail runs out over the jetty so far as completed. Upon this railway run the trucks laden with the necessary materials, and the mattress is constructed above the spot in the ocean into which it is to be sunk. In the first place, a wooden framework is built, on which are fixed, perpendicularly, iron bars. Upon this framework and the iron bars the brush is then thrown down from the trucks, the rails being run out upon piles a considerable height above the water's level. When a sufficient quantity of brush has thus been thrown down, a pressure of some four thousand tons is applied to flatten it, the projecting ends of the iron bars are turned down, and there is the mattress complete, ready to be lowered into the water and sunk into position by the weight of the great stones which are then thrown upon it from trucks on the railway line.

The Central Mexican Railway Company have the concession for this work, and to perform it they have what is practically a subsidy—in the form of bonds issued by the Government—of three million and a half of dollars. In return the Central Mexican Railway Company undertake to keep the channel clear to the depth of twenty-two feet; and the engineers say that they will be better than their contract, and keep it at a minimum depth of twenty-four feet.

The contracting company themselves will say nothing as to the probable cost of the work, save that it is impossible to make a close estimate. But the opinion of the outside world, who generally consider themselves better informed on such matters than the parties whose business it is, maintain that the company has a

very fine contract, and that the works will cost no more than some two millions of dollars. But against this generally expressed opinion must be set the fact that no other company could work the concession nearly so cheaply. The Central Mexican have recently—that is, within less than two years—completed a railway line from Tampico to San Luis Potosi, which latter is a junction, as one may say, with the great arteries of the railway system of Mexico. By means of this line they are able to bring down all the material used in the construction of the jetties on their own trucks, obtaining the material free of charge along their own railway track. Clearly all these advantages ready to the hand of the Central Mexican Railway Company are to be taken into consideration as virtually representing value given by them when they come to deal with a sub-contractor.

Assuming, then, as we seem fully justified in doing, the successful clearing of the sandbank as tolerably assured, let us see in what position Tampico stands to profit thereby.

The Panuco River is navigable, as we have said, for vessels practically of any tonnage, for many miles above the town itself. It is a town, much like other Mexican towns, of flat-roofed white houses, of a plaza wherein small-leaved trees of dense foliage give a very grateful shade from the tropical sun; of a certain number of evil smells, but of no great unhealthiness, and, indeed, with a remarkable immunity from small-pox and yellow fever. There is an opera-house, visited by companies from the City of Mexico, in which the resident aristocracy have their private boxes, and in which gentlemen in blue blouses, keeping their sombreros on their heads and their cigars in their mouths, sit in the front row of the stalls, in company with Mexico-Americans in the tall hats from which the American is parted with as much difficulty as the British householder from his stalwart umbrella. There are Mexicans in ponchos or serapes. There are bars before the windows of most of the houses. There is a fine cathedral, with a richly and crudely carved and ornamented front; there are hotels, built round a great central courtyard, with piazzas and balconies. The rooms are as big as ball-rooms, and as bare, and the food is—Mexican. There are ladies in mantillas and face-powder, and there are numerous mosquitoes.

With regard to the cathedral and the hotel we may go back to say another word. Mexico is a great country of churches; they are vastly in excess of the spiritual needs of the people, but even though in Vera Cruz many have been turned into tobacco

factories, and a notable one in Mexico City into a public library, still they preserve a handsome appearance and a richly carved and ornamented exterior. But that which strikes the methodical Anglo-Saxon mind with awe is that they were built, one and all of them, as all authorities agree, on no preconceived plan or system. The Spanish priests just said to the people, 'build,' and they built; as Charles Dickens is said to have written 'Pickwick.'

With respect to the hotels, one has perhaps said a hard thing in saying that the food is Mexican. There is but one tolerable hotel, and at that the food is really not intolerable. The fish is excellent, and there are prawns of gigantic size, with the largest antennæ that prawn was ever possessed of. They are in the same ratio to the antennæ of an English prawn as a Spaniard's moustaches to an Englishman's. Perhaps it is the climate. But though large and long-antennæd, the flesh of the prawns is rather insipid.

The Tampico River—that is, the Panuco—swarms with fish. As we went out along the railway over the jetty we saw crowds of fish in the water, big fish chasing shoals of little ones, who now and again jumped sheer out of the water for several yards in their hurry and agony to escape, and on one of the posts sat a great kingfisher watching his opportunity. But the monsters of the Panuco River we did not see, such as sharks, which are horribly numerous; alligators, which have been very largely destroyed for their skins; and tarpons, which grow to the weight of two hundred and fifty pounds. They fish for tarpon with a line from a boat, and when you get on a two hundred and fifty pounder it becomes a question whether you tow about the tarpon or the tarpon tows about the boat. And if you eventually succeed in tiring him and getting him into the boat, it then becomes a question whether he or you, or either of you, are going to stay there.

The alligator-shooting, which has been carried on to a cruel extent, cannot have been nearly such exciting sport. Men would go out in a boat, at night, with a pistol or a rifle, and with a lantern tied upon their forehead. They paddled softly about the river until in the darkness they saw a pair of green gleaming eyes. They rowed up softly to them, with their bull's-eyed forehead well forward over the bow of the boat. The gleaming green eyes would not move or wink, but gaze in fixed fascination on the approaching lantern. Then the Cyclops in the boat would lean over, and, putting the muzzle of his rifle or pistol almost touching the green eyes, pull the trigger and quench their gleam for ever.

An assistant would have been standing ready to throw a hook into the creature's side, so that it should not sink, and so the tame slaughter went on, till now there are few alligators left.

As one goes down the river from Tampico to the bar, one sees on the right hand, that is to say the south side, a canal cut through the reeds at the river's bank, and if one takes the trouble to look in the map one may see, further, that there is a very large lagoon in the direction in which the canal leads—a lagoon stretching down southwards to no very great distance from Tuxpan. The chief product of Tuxpan appears to be asphalte, rising from natural springs in its neighbourhood, and it is thus that Tuxpan is striving to find an export for its product in the direction of Tampico.

But this is an item of no consideration whatever in comparison with the great exports of which Tampico is to be the point of shipment, and, to see some of them, let us first try northward along the course of the Monterey and Mexican Gulf railroad, as yet carried only within something under a hundred kilometres of Tampico:

[As this article is written in a far land, and one in which postage is not so certain and punctual as in the climes in which it only costs a penny, it may be that before this meets the eye of the English reader the railroad in question may be well nigh complete. At all events, it is the hope of its promoters and managers that it will be carried through in the month of May, 1891.]

The shortest route to Mexico City from the Eastern States is by way of San Antonio and Laredo. At Laredo the Rio Grande River is the boundary of the two Republics—Laredo, a town of some twelve thousand odd inhabitants, being on the Texan side, and Nuevo Laredo, of nine thousand odd, on the Mexican side. At Laredo you change off the standard gauge line of the United States on to the three-foot narrow gauge line of the Mexican National. For some years this line enjoyed an evil reputation for accidents and unpunctuality, and passengers used to prefer a longer route by way of Eagle Pass and the Mexican International. But under comparatively recent changes of management the National line has effected very great improvements in its track and general arrangements, and in safety and punctuality it does not compare unfavourably with any other. The natural result has followed, and is following in increasing ratio, namely, that many more passengers and far more freight are being carried on this line than in former years. The next place to Laredo of

any importance on the line is Monterey, and here the line comes into junction with the not yet completed track of the Monterey and Mexican Gulf to Tampico.

This is a point at which Tampico, the future port of the Mexican Gulf, will be in immediate connection with the traffic line to and from the north. But, further than this, the prospects of Monterey itself are of a kind which promise great things for the future trade of Tampico and of the Monterey and Gulf line, which will run directly to the port. In the first place, Monterey is a town of fifty-five thousand inhabitants, with an excellent and equable climate, and situated in the midst of mountain scenery of great beauty.

You will have left Laredo over-night, and your visions will have been of a white Oriental-looking town in a flat, baking desert of sand; for Laredo is said to be the hottest place, after Yuma, in the States. In the morning you may awake at Monterey in different climate and scenery. The air is fresh and bracing. Around arises, straight off the plain (as the manner of mountains is in Mexico), an amphitheatre reaching to the clouds. The most noticeable feature is the Silla Mountain, in exact outline of the cavalry-saddle of the United States Army—a modification of the Mexican saddle. Indeed, it is said that General MacClellan took the idea of the cavalry-saddle directly from this mountain. A little to the north is another very striking mountain—Las Mitras, or the Mitre Mountain, again so named from the suggestion of its outlines. Beneath the Mitre is a white domed building, still called the Bishop's Palace, though no hierarch of the Church militant lives there now, but only a small garrison of Mexican troops. The range appears to embrace the town circularly, though really there are cañons and valleys through which the railways and the mule-tracks wind, so that altogether Monterey, in the vast amphitheatre of the eternal hills on which the shadows come and go under a wondrous cloudscape, is as fair a place as there is under heaven. Nevertheless, it has its bull-fight every Sunday, and not a Mexican of them all but has his pistol or his knife upon his hip. Still, they are a law-abiding race, as all who have knowledge of them say; and, though here and there in the cactus and mesquite scrub is a column or a cross to mark where a dueller has died, the pistol is rather worn as a finish to the dress than a requisite of safety.

Among the hills, some three miles from Monterey, are natural hot springs of curative properties. The bananas have not

been touched by the winter, the orange-trees are laden with golden fruit, and the cotton shrubs are fluffy. So Monterey has not been treated badly by those who had the original bestowal of Nature's gifts. It is but lately that she has felt the impulse of big industrial enterprise.

There are three smelting-works in Monterey, two in course of construction only, and one with near a dozen furnaces in full blast. It is fine to step in off the sandy desert and the splendid lazy sunshine to this scene of fiery toil—to see the red stream of the slag come rushing out, when they stave a hole in the clay plug of the furnace, and form into great cones in concave vessels. When it gets too obstreperous and splashes the liquid fire about, a man plugs the aperture with a fid of clay upon a long iron rod. Meanwhile the molten silver and lead, being heavier than the liquid slag, have sunk to the bottom of the furnace, and are being ladled out at another orifice and poured into troughs, there to cool into bars. In a building beyond are the great engines for the supply of forced draught to the furnaces. Truly, Tubal Cain was a great man, and human beings are clever little creatures.

Besides the smelteries there is a big foundry, well under way, and a big brewery which has not risen much above its foundations. But by the time the Tampico harbour works are finished all these big enterprises in Monterey may be in working order, and the railway be completed which shall put the industrial centre in communication with the port. It is also contemplated to put Monterey and its smelteries into more direct communication with the mines themselves by the construction of a new line of railway from Monterey to the Sierra Mojada.

Of course the majority of the workmen employed in the smelteries and other businesses are Mexican. With respect to the value of Mexican labour there seems much difference of opinion. The evidence, however, goes to show that, as a rule, the Mexican is a useful worker under good supervision, very enduring while he is at his work; but rather liable to go astray when he has collected a few dollars, and not to reappear until they are spent. American skilled workmen can only be tempted so far from home by the promise of high payment, but the companies are gradually educating the natives to a considerable degree of skill.

The real *métier* of these people is the management of cattle. In herding wild stock with the aid of their lassoes they are probably without equals. A skilful rope-man will lasso the forefeet

of a galloping steer ; then, pressing his horse closer to the steer, will slacken the lariat, and with a jerk will throw the slack of the rope in a loop round the steer's neck, so that with this double purchase on feet and neck he can throw the steer easily. Of the wonderful things they can do with a rope they sometimes give evidence that annoys the railway people, unscrewing with a bit of raw hide and a stick an iron nut which a white man could scarcely unscrew with a wrench. The purpose of this misplaced ingenuity is larceny.

In order to see the whole of the country between Monterey and Tampico along the projected railway line it was necessary, when the writer visited it (February, 1891), to drive the last ninety miles or so of the way from the end of the railway track. After leaving Monterey the country became less parched. There was a species of dry grass on the ground, the scrub grew higher, and here and there a palm, relatively a giant, towered over it. There were cattle, and, to the right, a range of mountains. To the left—that is, eastward—the country was level and gently undulating, and relieved by small knolls. It constantly increased in beauty, diversity, and interest; the trees were green and of fine size, and the mountains nearer than before. This side of the Panuco River is not considered so good as the southern side for the fattening of cattle, but it is excellent for breeding them; and the habit is to drive down the lean stock to be fattened on the south side of the Panuco. All, however, is fine country, and the value of land ridiculously small. Possibly a quarter-dollar, Mexican—*i.e.*, something less than a shilling—an acre would buy it. It is not a country to which one could advise a single English farmer to come alone; but in a colony, under good management, where could he go better? The trouble of the whole matter is not with the higher, but with the lowest, class of workers, and for farming one must have hewers of wood and drawers of water. The Mexicans will hardly stay by you; you cannot rely on them. Often as not, after a few days' work, they will be off to spend their earnings. Americans will not come. English might come—and stay.

The road to Tampico is of such a nature that on the landward side, before the construction of the railway to San Luis Potosi, the town must have been practically isolated. Nothing on wheels could travel on it at more than foot's pace through the dreadful sand roads. It was at the mercy of pack trains, except in so far as it could get its supplies in over the sandbar or down the river. This, however, is no uncommon case for Mexican coast towns.

Two railway lines run, more or less parallel, from the Mexican Gulf to the heart of Mexico. There is the Vera Cruz line, running from Vera Cruz to Mexico City, and there is the lately opened line of the Mexican Central, running from Tampico to San Luis Potosi. The line from Vera Cruz is a very beautiful line, very steep in the gradient, and very expensive. There are gradients on it of five per cent. Now the gradients of the line from Tampico to San Luis Potosi are severe, but they are not so steep as those of the Vera Cruz line; they do not exceed three per cent. At first, out of Tampico, it goes through level country, between lagoon and river. Crimson-winged flamingoes will arise as we go up in the early morning. Then the slow train ascends the foothills, and soon we are gazing down upon a sea of tropical woodland, with plain country opening away beyond. Upon the rocks, where recent railway work has felled the trees, are creepers with masses of blue flower.

Higher, the character of the trees changes. It is a country given over to the palmetto; the walls of his huts are here for the Mexican ready made. Passing this plateau we come to the higher ranges of the Sierra Madre, and here is a panorama such as we believe, in all earnestness, no other railway line in the world can show. Up and up, the mountains stretch, in unbroken reaches, wooded to the very summit, and up we climb among them, unfolding new stretches of their beauty and new mysteries of their distances, while below and around is a wealth of the most extraordinarily exuberant vegetation—immense trees, with creepers stretching long menacing arms to their very tops, as if to drag them down, yet without checking their marvellous growth. So dense is the network of the creepers that it seems as though, were the train to topple over, as it threatens to do, it would not be hurt, but fall softly on the lacework of foliage and lianas. In the shady corners of the railway cutting are maiden-hair and other ferns. In the spaces of the big trees and lianas are broad-leaved, scarlet-flowered ‘canna’ plants and the quaint fruit of the pitcher-plant; and here and there is a great bamboo-like cane shooting up a lance through the mass of creepers to the skies.

On the foothills of the mountains they grow coffee, and here and there on the steep sides are clearances for sugar-cane; but, above all, in their limitless expanse of virgin soil they should be able to grow tobacco. Everyone knows that tobacco demands virgin soil, but everyone also knows, or should know, the peculiar

danger attendant on the clearing of virgin forest—that the sun is let in on a mass of vegetable life and death that has not seen the sun for ages, and malaria becomes rife in a country that was healthy before it was cleared.

But, after all, the malaria of these countries is not of a malignant type. It does not stick by one with the hateful affection of the malarious fevers of the East, and the malarious influences become exhausted after the ground has been made for five or six years clear.

There is little life to be seen in the denseness of this thicket—an occasional Mexican encampment, a few bright butterflies; but really it is stocked with life—a happy hunting-ground for the ornithologist and entomologist, and, curiously, with few snakes.

Now, from the train, we catch sight, in a valley below us, of a waterfall of the most marvellously vivid emerald, set off by the snowy foam of its crest and depths; and as we climb the mountain this emerald stream is with us, alongside of us, until we reach the top and the watershed.

Here all the scene changes. There is a large Mexican encampment, which has evidently been larger, for much of the ground, now uncultivated, has the gentle ridge and furrow of land worked by a people whose plough is a crooked stick tied to the oxen's horns. We are in a country somewhat like the more desert parts of Scotland, and so we fare onwards to San Luis Potosi.

San Luis Potosi is the most important town between Monterey and Mexico City, for Monterey is sapping all the life out of Saltillo, which also lies between. It is the junction of the Central Mexican Railway with the National, and from San Luis runs a line connecting with the main Central Mexican at Aguas Calientes. Moreover, there is in course of building at San Luis a smelting-work which will be greater than any even at Monterey; so that here, again, from the west we see a freight of importance destined to be carried to Tampico.

For all which reasons we think we shall be permitted the use of the imposing title claimed for Tampico at the head of this paper—‘A New Port for Mexico;’ and we think that we may be forgiven if we have told a too familiar tale, for it has been our experience that the average Englishman receives with both surprise and incredulity the assertion that Mexico is not in South America.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

Collecting from Nature.

AFTER a long, hard winter the calling voice of spring sounds its clear invitation even to the town's inmost heart. Something whispers the news to many who never saw dark elm-boughs rocking above wild snowdrops whiter than the lingering snow, or gathered the odorous violets brought by murmuring April to our English lanes—who do not know what it is to watch the first glister of flossy catkins on the river willow, the earliest tassels that flutter from the hazel twigs, to hear the first love music of the lark, to welcome the earliest primrose. But if life's stirring renewal is lightly felt and soon forgotten by these, it is gladly welcomed and cherished by the increasing number of those who, although obliged by modern conditions to inhabit the city, even amid the strife and din of its streets, lapse occasionally into dreams of clear brook and green field, and have leisure and means to gratify their longing. I refer neither to the few who compete for Highland deer-forests and are familiar figures by the fox-covert, whom spring calls to the salmon-river, and autumn to heather, and stubble, and turnip; nor to the huge multitudes who on Bank Holiday rouse the dappled deer of Epping Forest with the noise of their merry-go-rounds, and people the beach at Margate, and swarm into every show-place within reach of an excursion; but to a class between, in whose lives there is more of ease than toil, who in youth were not trained to sport, and to whom taste, culture, and perhaps the doctor also, say that the purest recreation of their idle moments awaits them out of doors, in the open country. It is their custom to steal away to the fields or the sea-beach, not at set seasons, as when the may-fly is on the river, or when autumnal leaves rival the pheasant's plumage in richness of tint, nor at set holidays, but at any time of the year when circumstances admit and the sun offers a pressing invitation.

But the restless Englishman in his idlest moments longs for an occupation. It is a physical impossibility for him to dangle

his legs over a grassy river-bank and do nothing more important than drop pebbles into the running stream. If he care neither for golf nor any kindred pastime, and if he does not shoot, nor angle, nor row, nor sail, nor sketch, nor garden, the chances are greatly in favour of his seeking amusement in the study of natural history; for this pursuit, the increasing popularity of which is a healthy reaction from the too feverish city life of our time, offers a combination of attractions. By investing the open-air ramble with a purpose it removes the uneasy twitchings of conscience absolute idleness is apt to engender in men habitually busy. There are few so constituted as in a perfectly aimless stroll to derive a full and quiet pleasure from a merely passive submission to the caresses of Nature, and who, when she fans them with the soft breath of summer and smiles from blue seas that reflect the blue of heaven, and from white-crested wave and green swaying, waving bough, and throat of bird and beast sings her tuneful music, while the very moor is golden with gorse, and every hedge-root, and ditch, and waste corner has its flower, can imagine no happier paradise. Nor is it everyone who is able to take an interest in minute and practically objectless observations; who, for example, at the season when dry rustling thickets have not yet recovered from the dormancy of winter, are content to sit on a scrubby knoll in the woodlands, and while they watch the cloud shadows flicker and pass over russet dead fern, and withered grass, count the voices of the March wind—how it rustles and whispers in the low beech-leaves, spared by winter storms, and travels with a long sigh through the shrivelled herbage; how it goes swish, swish, swish among the bending tree-tops, and gives a long, strong sigh to the pollards; how it laments on the height and in the hollow circles in the faint beginning of a roar that chokes and dies away ere its volume is increased. Nay, it requires either a peculiar temperament or a long training to watch even the movements of living things with quiet and continued patience. There is close to a certain highway a still pond bordered with oaks, and in spring it is so clear as to show in sunny days every vein of the rotting leaves that floor its bed. Being deflected by the trees, the wind never blows evenly across its surface but in capfuls, whose swift course as they dart hither and thither at various angles is marked in a chase of tiny darkling ripples. It is an ideal ocean for schoolboys, and on holiday and playhour is white with the sails of their mimic fleet; for that very reason it is shunned by the ordinary student of nature, who is sure they

have stoned or terrified to death every living inhabitant of its water. But to-day they are conning Virgil and Euclid; and look you at the circling wavelets like those produced by the rise of a trout or the bobbing of an angler's cork—these never were made by the wind. Approach, and in a moment all is still as was the mere whereinto Sir Bedevere plunged Excalibur. Wait a little, however, and a score of heads, each jewelled with eyes of matchless beauty and 'freaked with jet,' like Milton's pansy, are thrust cautiously up, and a company of frogs with the full sweet low entreaty for which croaking is too harsh a term, recommence their interrupted love-making. To the true student of nature who, even to a mean degree, possesses some spark of the spirit that animated a Jefferies or a Thoreau, each little comedy of courtship played there is as interesting as is to old age the innocent sweethearting of youth, or a wholesome drama to dawning womanhood; though perhaps of him, as of Wordsworth's ideal poet, it may be said that he was

Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

If an inference may be drawn from recent manifestations of taste, it would appear that there is an increase in the number of those who find that, apart from the thirst for knowledge and arrangement and classification, there is an interest in life and matter and motion, and that the green fields and towering mountains and rushing waters of earth are not wholly to be regarded as staging and scenery for human action, or matter for analysis, and that even the low form of worship Carlyle contemptuously set aside as view-haunting is not to be altogether despised.

But the average man, even though he appreciate this gift in others, desires for himself something more active than mere contemplation, more definite and positive than the observation, that is a reflection of enjoyment rather than an accumulation of facts. And so his devotion to nature takes the form of collecting, wherein he at once finds a pastime that involves no acute physical distress, a mild excitement with a flavour of sport outlet for the universal human desire to gather something, and a pleasing consciousness that he is furthering science and amassing information.

The collection of natural objects has advantages over every other form of the same passion. Who would gather china or curios, books or pictures, is doomed to wander in dingy streets, to rummage ancient shop and stall, to frequent stuffy auction-rooms,

and with the enthusiasm for his hobby to cultivate also the astuteness of a horse-coper and the close-fistedness of a retail grocer. But Nature loads with unsought gifts those who seek her treasures, and it is no poisonous wind, but the fresh sea-breeze, that blows upon him who clambers the rocks and examines the tidepool for shells and algæ; ferns hide in the shadiest and most sequestered nooks; wild flowers and birds' nests—the very mention of them suggests—

. . . a season atween June and May
Half pranked with spring, with summer half imbrowned.

He who flies at no higher game than moss and lichen will still be led to ivied and crumbling ruins and cool dells where vivid green carpets the earth and a cushion is thrown on the boulders. And whether a man's pursuit carry him to the sea-beach or the forest, to the river or the rill, it is crowned with health.

Nevertheless, the desire to hoard and save and gather that so often changes a bright, enjoyable amusement into an insensate passion lies in wait even for the naturalist; and what in others is a pardonable weakness becomes in him a crime against society. A bibliomaniac seized with a craze for filling his shelves with curious books he hardly ever dreams of opening, and whose hunger to acquire has swallowed up the higher love of reading, though he be but a miser under a different guise, is still of service to the community. It is impossible for a book to have more than one owner at a time, and it is an advantage that he should rescue it from obscure and unsafe keeping. But the birds that twitter by dusty highway and woodland path, the nests and eggs concealed by them among the green boughs and tall grass, the heaths and grasses, wild flowers and ferns, the mosses and fungi that luxuriously garment the fertile land, and are never wholly absent on the barest scarp of rock or dreariest upland moor, are common property, and never more delightful than in their appointed places. The amateur of curios and the antiquary are able to preserve and beautify and enhance the value of their relics. It is not so with the out-of-door collector. A preserved plant is beneath comparison with a living one, an egg's more brilliant colours fade from the moment it is blown, fur and plumage are slightly but perceptibly dulled by death, and the most adept taxidermist can show but one attitude of a creature whose chiefest charm lies in change and movement. 'Well-preserved specimens,' says an enthusiastic authority, 'will last for ever and a day;' but

what he means is, that if assiduously preserved from defilement and mutilation and insects, a well-stuffed bird may possibly last for a century. Long before that period has elapsed it has become in the eyes of a lover of nature (as distinguished from the student of natural history) as unlike a living bird as a mummy is unlike a human being.

Nature is so bountiful that without any perceptible impoverishment she is able to fill the cabinets and museums necessary to scientific research, to give the artist enough of specimens to draw from, and even to satisfy the amateur so long as his numbers do not inordinately multiply and he is content with the result of his own exertions. But her riches are not inexhaustible, and if the rage for collecting is allowed to go on developing at its present rate in a country so densely populated as England, it must soon result in a very serious diminution of our avi-fauna. It puts as it were the finishing-touch upon the destruction necessary to agriculture and game-preserving. We drain mere and lake, and the bittern that boomed from the Lincolnshire fens and the swampy regions round the upper Isis and the Border mires and bogs is driven from a home to which if he attempts to return he is a target for the collector's gun; even the very curlew has to retreat as the ploughshare rives up the waste land above which he loves to pipe his melancholy tune. As soon as ever a bird grows sufficiently scarce to possess a money value it is scarcely possible for it to escape; not because amateurs are so numerous and vigilant, but because the net of the dealer is spread so wide. There is hardly a pot-hunter or shore-prowler who does not know the value of a specimen, and it is a common practice to blaze away on chance at any large or unusual bird, whether it be a rare visitor like the night heron or an estray from an ornamental water like those tame swans of Lord Ducie's that last winter fell victims to a zeal for natural history. When abroad with his gun the amateur is not a whit more merciful. 'I must tell you to shoot an unknown bird on sight; it may give you the slip in a moment and a prize may be lost,' says the author of *Field and General Ornithology*; and there never was a precept more regularly acted upon. The misfortune is, that so many of our visitors are unknown in this sense. On the Cambridge and Oxon hills, which once were visited by flights of dotterel, this bird, when he halts for a day *en route* to his hilly breeding-grounds, is annually shot as a stranger, and will soon be driven from our shores. Of the golden orioles one

sees in provincial exhibitions and museums nearly all are in full breeding plumage, and in some cases were confessedly slain while constructing the hanging nest they attach to a forked bough.

The worst sufferers, however, are undoubtedly the birds of prey—those that of all others most enhance the beauty of landscape; for there is not in the realm of wings anything more beautiful than the sight of a white skua hawking along a rocky coast, a hen harrier quartering the meadows like a setter, an eagle swooping from his eyrie. But the stuffer knows well that for these he has a ready custom. An owl with beady eyes looking down on a mouse in its talons, a sparrow-hawk holding a young partridge, a jay or a magpie making off with eggs—these are representations of life dear to the heart of a certain type of householder. ‘I have seen,’ says Mr. Aplin in his *Birds of Oxfordshire*, ‘as many as fifteen (barn-owls) in a bird-stuffer’s shop in May, all of which had been recently received.’ Nearly thirty years ago, when an extraordinary plague of mice swarmed over the Border farms, it was soon checked by the vast number of carnivora attracted to the spot. Since then gamekeeper and collector have steadily pursued the work of extermination, and as a result millions of little pilferers have arisen to spoil husbandry. Not only in Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and the Lothians, but in counties wherefrom no public complaint has come, the rodents in bank and hedgerow are a serious hindrance to agriculture. Sparrow clubs and associations for suppressing wood-pigeons do the work of hawk and falcon. So enormously have starlings increased that it is almost certain they will have to change their diet and steal grain and fruit (which they will already do under stress of hunger) instead of destroying grubs and insects; just as the rook, from the same cause, annually seems to delight more in eggs and young birds. As to common linnet, and finch, and thrush, and blackbird, there is no gardener who does not wince under the increasing extent of their depredations.

Beyond question this state of things is due to the inordinate slaughter of birds of prey; the doubt is, whether the gamekeeper or the collector is the more to blame for it. The former began by thinning down the golden and white-tailed eagles, the osprey and buzzards, the kite, merlin, and peregrine and sparrow-hawk to a point after which a specimen is more or less of a rarity; and the other completes the work of destruction. Probably the dealer is in both cases at the root of the evil, for he at once offers an unfailing market for the sale and exchange of specimens, and by his action

puts a premium on the extermination of species. On the other hand, there has been during recent years a distinct growth in the number of those who, with no eye to the beauties of nature and no studious aim, have taken to collecting as a light and elegant amusement. One often sees them at work on the shore, on waste or common land, and on farms whereof the landlords, since the passing of the Ground Game Act, have abandoned the shooting, as Mr. Chaplin has, for example, on his Lincolnshire property. But, to realise how injurious to wild life this latest fancy is, it is necessary to turn to one of the numerous manuals of instruction drawn up for the guidance of beginners.

'How many birds of the same kind do you want?' is a question asked in one of the best and most reasonable of these popular handbooks, and the answer is, '*All you can get*—with some reasonable limitations; say fifty or a hundred of any but the most abundant and widely diffused species.' To attain this end, the novice is exhorted to begin 'by shooting every bird you can,' and he is assured that he will 'do very well' if he can average twelve birds a day during the season, although forty or fifty will be bagged by the adept. While the sportsman only counts heads, however, the ornithologist must look to variety; and unless he has made a rare species still rarer, has no ground for pride. On that account his season is in autumn and in spring, when the different migrants are come; the time of nest-building having peculiar attractions. If strange eggs are discovered it is generally possible to entrap the dam with a noose of horsehair placed over the nest, and the eminent ornithologist already quoted is strong on the advantage of securing females. 'Bird-life is too beautiful a thing to destroy to no purpose,' he says, and then, after quoting 'Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without His notice,' he proceeds in the next sentence, 'I should not neglect to speak particularly of the care to be taken to secure full *suites* of females,' and shows the great advantages to science of getting them in the breeding season.

It might be thought that the lover of life who shares the old-fashioned sentiment of Shenstone—

For he ne'er could be true, she averred,
Who could rob a poor bird of its young;
And I lov'd her the more, when I heard
Such tenderness fall from her tongue—

and who compares the bird-collector unfavourably with the wretch who would 'peep and botanise upon his mother's grave,' might

derive some consolation from the Wild Birds' Protection Act. But it is notorious that this measure is practically a dead letter. It is utterly set at naught not only by the amateur naturalist, but by the still more injurious, because more expert, professional collectors, who trade on his desire for specimens. Even in London birdshops there are visible in May newly-caught skylarks and thrushes, and dealers make no trouble about getting eggs or birds because of what is only nominally a close time.

Something may perhaps result from the efforts now being made to strengthen its provisions, but still more is to be hoped from the growing love of nature as something quite other than fumbling among the dead bones of natural history. The place for stuffed specimens is the museum or the student's cabinet. Considered as a subject of pride merely, the possession of a collection of bird-skins is as monstrous as a dead bird in a lady's bonnet.¹

P. ANDERSON GRAHAM.

¹ Since the above was written, the Rev. J. C. Atkinson, D.C.L., has published a delightful volume called *'Forty Years in a Moorland Parish,'* and his remarks on the ornithology of Danby are in such absolute accord with the views here set forth that I venture to summarise some of them. Mr. Atkinson finds the visits of the woodpeckers grown *'strangely like those of angels,'* and *'the raven has been extirpated within my time. The barn owl—they used to breed in the church tower—had gone a few years before. The brown owl, wood owl, or screech owl, if it exists still, is represented by one pair only.'* Among other birds exterminated or become rare he mentions the merlin, the harrier, the sparrow-hawk, and the kestrel, the result being *'an inordinate increase of field mice.'* As examples of *'reckless bird-murdering'* he tells of three kingfishers that appeared in the beck and were immediately chased by *'five fellows with guns,'* while a spotted woodpecker, whose note was heard, immediately fell a victim to the collector also. What goes on in this particular parish is but typical of proceedings in every other part of the country.

*The Three Fates.*¹

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD, AUTHOR OF 'MR. ISAACS,'
'DR. CLAUDIUS,' &C.

CHAPTER VII.

NOT long after the events last chronicled, the Fearings left New York for the summer, and George was left to his own meditations, to the society of his father, and to the stifling heat of the great city. He had seen Constance again more than once before she and her sister had left town, and he had parted from her on the best of terms. To tell the truth, since his sudden exhibition of violent temper, she had liked him even better than before. His genuine anger had to some extent dissipated the cloud of doubt which always seemed to her to hang about his motives. The doubt itself was not gone, for as it had a permanent cause in her own fortune it was of the sort not easily driven away.

As for George himself, he considered himself engaged, of course in a highly conditional way, to marry Miss Constance Fearing. She had repeated, at his urgent solicitation, what she had said when he had first declared himself—to wit, that if she ever loved him she would marry him, and that there was no one whom she at present preferred to him. More than this he could not obtain from her, and in his calm moments, which were still numerous, he admitted that she was perfectly fair and just in her answer. He, on his part, had declared with great emphasis that, however she might love him, he would not marry her until he was independent of all financial difficulties and had made himself a name. On the whole, nothing could have seemed more improbable than that the marriage could ever take place. The distance between writing second-rate reviews at ten dollars a column and being one of the few successful writers of the day is

¹ Copyright 1891, by F. Marion Crawford.

really almost as great as it looks to the merest outsider. Moreover, a friendship of several months' standing is, generally speaking, a bad foundation on which to build hopes of love. The very intimacy of intercourse forbids those surprises in which love chiefly delights. Friendly hands have taken the bandage from his eyes, and he has learned to see his way about with remarkable acuteness of perception.

Perhaps the most immediate and perceptible effect of the last few interviews with Constance was to be found in the work he turned out, and in the dissatisfaction it caused in quarters where it had formerly been considered excellent. It was beginning to be too good to serve its end, for the writer was beginning to feel that he could no longer efface his individuality and repress his own opinions as he had formerly done. He exceeded in his articles the prescribed length, he made vicious Latin quotations and concocted savagely epigrammatic sentences, he inserted sharp remarks about prominent writers where they were manifestly beside the purpose; besides being palpably unjust, there was a sting in almost every paragraph which did not contain a paradox, and, altogether, he made the literary editors who employed him very nervous.

'It won't do, Mr. Wood,' one of them said. 'The publishers don't like it. Several have written to me. The paper can't stand this kind of thing. I suppose the fact is that you are getting too good for this work. Take my advice. Either go back to your old style, or write articles over your own name for the magazines. They like quotations and snap and fine writing—authors and publishers don't, not a bit.'

'I have tried articles again and again,' George answered. 'I cannot get them printed anywhere.'

'Well—you just go ahead and try again. You'll get on if you stick to it. If you think you can write some of your old kind of notices, here's a lot of books ready. But, seriously, Mr. Wood, if you write any more like the last dozen or so, I can't take them. I'm sorry, but I really can't.'

'I'll have one more shot,' said George desperately, as he took up the books. He could not afford to lose the wretched pay he got for the work.

He soon saw that other managers of literary departments thought very much as this first specimen did.

'A little more moderation, Mr. Wood,' said a second, who was an elderly æsthetic personage. 'I hate violence in all its forms. It is so fatiguing.'

'Very well,' said George submissively.

He went to another, the only one whom he knew rather intimately, a pale, hardworking, energetic young fellow, who had got all manner of distinctions at English and German universities, who had a real critical talent, and who had risen quickly to his present position by his innate superiority over all competitors in his own line. George liked him and admired him. His pay was not brilliant, for he was not on one of the largest papers, but he managed to support his mother and two young sisters on his earnings.

'Look here, Wood,' he said one morning, 'this is not the way criticism is done. You are not a critic by nature. Some people are. I believe I am, and I always meant to be one. You do this sort of thing just as you would do any writing that did not interest you, and you do it fairly well, because you have had a good education, and you know a lot of things that ordinary people do not know. But it is not your strong point, and I do not believe it ever will be. Try something else. Write an article.'

'That is what everybody tells me to do,' George answered. He was disappointed, for he believed that what he did was really good, and he had expected that the man with whom he was now speaking would have been the one of all others to appreciate his work. 'That is what they all tell me,' he continued, 'but they do not tell me how to get my articles accepted. Have you a recipe for that, Johnson?'

The pale young man did not answer at once. He was extremely conscientious, which was one reason why he was a good critic.

'I cannot promise much,' he said at last. 'But I will tell you what I will do for you. If you will write an article, or a short story—say five to eight thousand words—I will read it and give you my honest opinion. If I like it, I'll push it, and it may get into print. If I don't, I'll tell you so, and I'll do nothing. You will have to try again. But I am convinced that you are naturally an author and not a critic.'

'Thank you,' said George gratefully. He knew what the promise meant from such a man as Johnson, who would have to sacrifice his time to the reading of the manuscript, and whose opinion was worth having.

'Can you give me any work this week?' he asked, before he took his leave.

Johnson looked at him quietly, as though making up his mind what to say.

'I would rather not. You do not do it as well as you did, and I am responsible. If there is anything else I could do for you——' He stopped.

'If you will be so kind as to read my article——'

'Yes, of course. I said I would. I mean——' Johnson looked away, and his pale face blushed to the roots of his hair. 'I mean—if you should need twenty dollars while the article is being written, I can——'

George felt a very peculiar emotion, and his voice was a little thick as he took the other's hand.

'Thank you, Johnson, but I don't need it. You are awfully kind, though. Nobody ever did as much for me before.'

When he left the room the nervous flush had not yet disappeared from the literary editor's forehead, nor had the odd sensation quite subsided from George's own throat. If Tom Craik had offered him the loan of twenty dollars he would have turned his back on him with a bitter answer. It was a very different matter when poor, overworked Johnson put his hand in his pocket and proffered all he could spare. For a minute George forgot all his disappointments and troubles in the gratitude he felt to the pale young man, nor did he ever lose remembrance of the kindly generosity that had prompted the offer.

But as he walked slowly homewards the bitterness of his heart began to show itself in another direction. He thought of the repeated admonitions and parcels of advice which had been thrust upon him during the last few days, he thought of his poverty, of his failures, and he compared all these facts with his aspirations. He, a poor devil who seemed to be losing the power to earn a miserable ten dollars with his pen; he, whose carefully-prepared articles had been rejected again and again, often without a word of explanation; he, the unsuccessful scribbler of second-rate notices, had aspired, and did still aspire, not only to marry Constance Fearing, but to earn for himself such a position as should make him independent of her fortune, so far as money was concerned, and which, in the direction of personal reputation, should place him in the first rank in his own country. Wonderful things happened sometimes in the world of letters; but, so far as he knew, they needed a considerable time for their accomplishment. He was well advanced in his twenty-sixth year already, and it was madness to hope to achieve fame in less than ten years at the least. In ten years Constance would be two-and-thirty. He had not thought of that before, and the idea filled him with

dismay. It seemed a great age, an absurd age for marriage ; and, after all, there was not the slightest probability of her waiting for him. In the first place, she did not love him, or, at least, she said that she did not, and, if her affection was not strong enough to declare itself, it could hardly be taken into consideration as an element in the great problem. The whole thing was ridiculous, and he would give up the idea—if he could.

But he could not. He recognised that the thought of Constance was the bright spot in his life, and that without her image he should lose half his energy. In the beginning there had been a sort of complacent acquiescence in the growth of his love, which made it seem as though he had voluntarily set up an idol of his own choosing, which he could change at will. But the idol had begun to feed on his heart, and was already exerting its mysterious, dominating influence over his actions and beliefs. He began to concoct a philosophy of self-deception, in the hope of obtaining a good result. It seemed certain that he could never marry Constance—certain, at all events, while this mood lasted—but he could still dream of her and look forward to his union with her. The great day would come, of course, when she would marry some one else, and when he should doubtless be buried in the ruin of his dreams, but until then he would sustain the illusion.

And what an illusion it was ! The magnitude of it appalled him. Penniless, almost ; dependent for his bread upon his ruined father ; baffled at every turn ; taught by experience that he had none of the power he seemed to feel—that was the list of his advantages, to be set in the balance against those possessed by Constance Fearing. George laughed bitterly to himself as he pursued his way through the crowded streets. It struck him that he must be a singularly unlucky man, and he wondered how men felt upon whom fortune smiled perpetually, who had never known what it meant to work hard to obtain a dollar, to whom money seemed as common and necessary an element as air. He remembered indeed the time when, as a boy, he had known luxury and existed in unbroken comfort, and the memory added a bitterness to his present case. Nevertheless he was not downhearted. Black as the world looked, he could look blacker, he fancied, and make the cheeks of fortune smart with the empty purse she had tossed in his face. His walk quickened, and his fingers itched for the pen. He was one of those men who harden and grow savage under defeat, reserving such luxuries as despondency for the hours of success.

Without the slightest hesitation he set to work. He scarcely knew how it was that he determined to write an article upon critics and criticism; but when he sat down to his table the idea was already present, and phrases of direful import were seething in the fire of his brain. All at once he realised how he hated the work he had been doing, how he loathed himself for doing it, how he detested those who had doled out to him his daily portion. What a royal satisfaction it was to 'sling ink,' as the reporters called it! To heap his full-stocked thesaurus of abuse upon somebody and something, and most especially upon himself, in his capacity as one of the critics! To devote the whole profession to the perdition of an everlasting contempt, to hold it up as a target for the public wrath, to spit upon it, to stamp upon it, to tear it to rags, and to scatter the tatters abroad upon the tempest of his reprobation! The phrases ran like wildfire along the paper as he warmed to his work, and dragged old-fashioned anathemas from the closets of his memory to swell the hailstorm of epithets that had fallen first. Anathema Maranatha! Damn criticism! Damn the critics! Damn everything!

It was a very remarkable piece of work when it was finished, more remarkable in some ways than anything he ever produced afterwards, and if he had taken it to Johnson in its original form the pale young man's future career might have been endangered by a fit of sudden and immoderate mirth. Fortunately, George already knew the adage—is it not Hood's?—which says 'it is the print that tells the tale.' He was well aware that writing ink is to printers' ink as a pencil drawing to a painted canvas, and that what looks mild and almost gentle when it appears in an irregular handwriting upon a sheet of foolscap can seem startlingly forcible when impressed upon perfectly new and very expensive paper, in perfectly new and very expensive type. He read the article over.

'Perhaps it is a little strong,' he said to himself, with a grim smile, as he reviewed what he had written. 'I feel a little like Wellington revisiting Waterloo!'

Indeed, from the style of the discourse, one might have supposed that George had published a dozen volumes simultaneously, and that every critic in the civilised world had sprung up and rent him with one accord. 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers' was but milk-and-water, with very little milk, compared with his onslaught. The dead lay in heaps, as it were, in the track of his destroying charge, and he had hanged, drawn, and quartered him-

self several times for his own satisfaction, gibbeting the quarters on every page. In his fury and unquenchable thirst for vengeance he had quoted whole passages from notices he had written, only to tear them to pieces and make bonfires of their remains.

‘I think I had better wait a day or two,’ he remarked, as he folded up the manuscript and put it into a drawer of his table.

It is characteristic of the profession and its necessities that, after having crushed and dismembered all critics, past, present, and to come, in the most complete and satisfactory manner, George Wood laid his hand upon the new volumes which he had last brought home and proceeded during several days with the task of reviewing them. Moreover, he did the work much better than usual, taking an odd delight in affecting the attitude of a gentle taster, and in using the very language he most despised, just for the sake of persuading himself that he was right in despising it. The two editors who had given him work to do that week were surprised to find that he had returned with such success to his former style of writing. They were still further surprised when an article, entitled ‘Cheap Criticism,’ appeared, about six weeks later, in a well-known magazine, signed with his name in full. They did not like it at all.

George had recast the paper more than once, and at last, when he had regretfully ‘rinsed all the starch out of it,’ as he said to himself, he had taken it to Johnson.

‘I did not know that any modern human being could use such violent language without swearing,’ said the pale young man, catching a phrase here and there as he ran his eye over the manuscript.

‘Do you call that violent?’ asked George, delighted to find that he had left his work more forcible than he had supposed. ‘I wish you could have seen the first copy! This looked like prayer and meditation compared with it.’

‘If you pray in that style,’ remarked Johnson, ‘your prayers will be at least heard, if they are not answered. They will attract attention in some quarter, though perhaps not in the right one.’

George’s face fell.

‘Do you think it is too red-hot?’ he asked. ‘I have been spreading butter on the public nose so long,’ he added, almost apologetically.

‘Oleomargarine,’ suggested Johnson. ‘It is rather warm. That phrase—“revelling in the contempt of appearing con-

temptible"—I say, Wood, that is not English, you know, and it's a scorcher, too.'

'Not English!' exclaimed George, whose blood was up at once. 'Why not?'

'Because it's Volapük, or Malay—or something else. I don't know what it is, though I admit its force.'

'I do not see how I can put it, then. It is just what we all feel.'

'Look here. You do not mean that your victim despises himself for appearing to be despicable, do you?' He does, I dare say, but you wanted to hit him, not to show that he is still capable of human feeling. I think you meant to say that he rejoiced in his own indifference to contempt.'

'I believe I did,' said George, relinquishing the contest as soon as he saw he was wrong. 'But "revel" is not bad. Let that stand, at least.'

'You cannot revel in indifference, can you?' asked Johnson pitilessly.

'No. That is true. But it was English, all the same, though it did not mean what I intended.'

'I think not. You would not say an author appears green, would you? You would say he appears to be green. Then why say that a critic appears contemptible?'

'You are always right, Johnson,' George answered with a good-natured laugh. 'I should have seen the mistake in the proof.'

'But that is the most expensive way of seeing mistakes. I will read this carefully, and I will send you word to-morrow what I think of it.'

'What makes you so quick at these things?' asked George, as he rose to go.

'Habit. I read manuscript novels for a publishing house here. I do it in the evening, when I can find time. Yes—it is hard work, but it is interesting. I am both prophet and historian. The book is the reality, which I see alternately from the point of view of the future and the past.'

The result was that Johnson, who possessed much more real power than George had imagined, wrote a note, with which the manuscript was sent, and to George's amazement the paper was at once accepted and put into type, and the proofs were sent to him. Moreover, the number of the magazine in which his composition appeared was no sooner published than he received a

cheque, of which the amount at once demonstrated the practical advantages of original writing as compared with those of second-rate criticism.

With regard to the attention attracted by his article, however, George was bitterly disappointed. He was on the alert for the daily papers in which an account of the contents of the periodicals is generally given, and he expected at least a paragraph from each.

In the first one he took up, after an elaborate notice of articles by known persons, he found the following line :

‘ Mr. George Winton Wood airs his views upon criticism in the present number.’

That was all. There was not a remark, not a hint at the contents of his paper, nothing to break the icy irony of the statement. He pondered long over the words, and then crammed the open sheet into the waste-paper basket. This was the first. There might be better in store for him. On the evening of the same day he found another :

‘ An unknown writer has an article upon criticism,’ said the oracle, without further comment.

This was, if possible, worse. George felt inclined to write to the editor and request that his name might be mentioned. It was a peculiarly hard case, as he had reviewed books for this very paper during the last two years, and was well known in the office. The third remark was in one of those ghastly-sprightly medleys written under the heading of ‘ Chit-Chat.’

‘ By the way,’ inquired the reviewer, ‘ who is Mr. George Winton Wood ? And why is he so angry with the critics ? And does anybody mind ? And who is he, any way ? ’

Half-a-dozen similar observations had the effect of cooling George’s hopes of fame very considerably. They probably did him good by eradicating a great deal of nonsense from his dreams. He had before imagined that in labouring at his book notices he had seen and known the dreariest apartment in the literary workhouse, forgetting that all he wrote appeared anonymously and that he himself was shielded behind the ægis of a prosperous newspaper’s name. He had not known that a beginner is generally received, to use a French simile, like a dog in a game of ninepins, with kicks and execrations, unless he is treated with the cold indifference which is harder to bear than any attack could be. And yet, cruel as the method seems, it is the best one in most cases, and saves the sufferer from far greater torments in the future. What would happen if every

beginner in literature were received at the threshold with cakes and ale, and were welcomed by a chorus of approving and encouraging critics? The nine hundred out of every thousand who try the profession and fail would fail almost as certainly a little later in their lives, and with infinitely greater damage to their sensibilities. Moreover, the cakes and ale would have been most unworthily wasted, and the chorus of critics would have been necessarily largely leavened with skilful liars, which, it is to be hoped and believed, is not the case in the present condition of criticism, in spite of George Wood and his opinions. Is it better that boys should be allowed to remain in school two or three years without being examined, and that the ignorant ones should then be put to shame before their comrades? Or is it better that the half-witted should be excluded from the first and separately taught? The question answers itself. We who, rightly or wrongly, have fought our way into public notice, have all, at one time or another, been made to run the gauntlet of abuse or to swim the dead sea of indifference. The public knows little of our lives. It remembers the first book of which everybody talked, and which, it foolishly supposed, represented our first experiment in print. It knows nothing of the many years of thankless labour in the columns of the daily press; it has never heard of our first paper in a magazine, nor of our pride at seeing our signature in a periodical of some repute, nor of the sovereign contempt with which the article and the name were received. The comfortable public has never dreamed of the wretched prices most of us received when we entered the ranks, and, to be honest, there is no reason why it should. It would be quite as sensible to found a society for the purpose of condoling with schoolboys during their examinations, as to excite the public sympathy on behalf of what one may call undergraduate authors. The weeding at the beginning keeps the garden clean and gay, and amputations must be performed in good time if the gangrene is to be arrested effectually.

George Wood, as has been said before, was not of the kind to be dependant, though he was easily roused to anger. The porcupine is an animal known to literature, as well as a beast of the field, and the quills of the literary porcupine can be very easily made to stand on end. George was one of the species, and, on the whole, a very favourable specimen. Fortunately for those who had accorded so little appreciation to his early efforts, he was at that time imprisoned in the enclosure appropriated to unknown

persons. He bristled unseen and wasted his wrath on the desert air. He had looked forward to the publication of his first article as to an emancipation from slavery, whereas he soon discovered that he had only been advanced to a higher rank in servitude. That is what most men find out when they have looked forward to emancipation of any kind, and wake up to find that, instead of being chained to one side of the wall, they are chained to the other.

George supposed that it would be now an easy matter to get some of his former work into print. He had four or five things in very tolerable shape, resting in a drawer where he had put them when last rejected. He got them out again, and again began to send them to periodicals, without consulting his friend Johnson. To his surprise, they were all returned without comment.

‘Go and ask for a job,’ said Johnson the omniscient when he heard of the failure. ‘Suggestion on the part of the editor is the better part of valour in the writer.’

‘What do you mean?’ asked George. He had supposed that there was nothing he did not know in this connection.

‘They won’t take articles on general subjects without a deal of interest and urging,’ answered the other. ‘Get introduced to them in person. I will do it with most of them. Then go to them and say: “I am a very remarkable young man, though you do not seem to know it. I will write anything about anything in the earth or under the earth. Sanskrit, botany, and the differential calculus are my especially strong points, but the North Pole has great attractions for me; I am strong in theology and political economy, and, if anything, I would rather spend a year in writing up the Fiji Islands than not. If you have nothing in this line, there is music and high art, in which I am sound. I have a taste for architecture, and I understand practical lobster-fishing. Have you anything for me to do?” That is the way to talk to these men,’ Johnson added with a smile. ‘Try it.’

George laughed.

‘But that is not literature,’ he objected.

‘Not literature? Everything that can be written about is literature, just as everything that can be eaten is man—in another form. You can learn as much English in writing up lobster-fishing as in trying to compose a five-act tragedy, and you will be paid for it into the bargain. Besides, if you are ever going to write anything worth reading, you must see more and

think less. Don't read books for a while; read things and people. Thinking too much, without seeing, is like eating too much—it makes your writing bilious.'

'This is the critic's recipe for acquiring fame in letters!' exclaimed George.

'Fame in letters is a sort of stuffed bugbear. You can frighten children with it, but it belongs to the days of witches and hobgoblins. The object of literature nowadays is to amuse without doing harm. If you do that well you will be famous and rich.'

'You are utterly cynical to-day, Johnson. Are you in earnest in what you advise me to do?'

'Perfectly. Try everything. Offer your services to write anything. Among all the magazines and weeklies there is sure to be one that is in difficulties because it cannot get some particular article written. Don't be too quick to say you understand the subject if you don't. Say you will try it. A man may get up almost any subject in six weeks, and it is a good thing for the mind, once in a long time. Try everything, I say. Make a stir. Let these people see you—make them see you, if they don't want to. It is not time lost. You can use them all in your books some day. There is an age when it is better to wear out shoe-leather than pens—when the sweat of the brow is worth a dozen bottles of ink. Don't sit over your desk yelping your discontent while your real brain is rusting. Confound it all! It is the will that does it, the stir, the energy, the beating at other people's doors, grinding up their stairs, making them feel that they must not lose the chance of using a man who can do so much, making them ashamed to send you away. Do you think I got to be where I am without a rough-and-tumble fight at the first? Take everything that comes into your way, do it as well as you know how, with all your might, and keep up a constant howl for more. They will respect you in spite of themselves.'

The pale young man's steel-blue eyes flashed, the purple veins stood out on his white clenched hands, and there was a smile of triumph in his face and a ring of victory in his voice. He had fought them all and had got what he wanted, by talent, by industry, but above all by his restless and untiring energy, and he was proud of it.

To George Wood, in his poverty, it seemed very little, after all, to be the literary editor of a daily paper. That was not the position he must win if he would marry Constance Fearing.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE summer passed quickly away without bringing any new element into George's life. He did not reject Johnson's advice, but he did not follow it to the letter. His instinct was against the method suggested by his friend, and he felt that he had not the assurance to follow it out. He was too sensitive and proud to employ his courage in besieging persons who did not want him. Nevertheless he found work to do, and his position was improved, though his writings still failed to attract any attention. He had imagined that there was but a step from the composition of magazine articles to the making of a book, but he soon discovered the fallacy of the idea, and almost regretted the old days of 'book-tasting.'

Meanwhile, his thoughts dwelt much on Constance, and he adorned the temple of his idol with everything upon which, figuratively speaking, he could lay his hands. Strange to say, her absence during the summer was a relief to him. It made the weakness of his position and the futility of his hopes seem less apparent, and it gave him time to make at least a step in the direction of success. He wrote to her as often as he dared, and twice in the course of the summer she answered with short letters that had in his eyes a suspicious savour of kindness rather than of anything even distantly approaching to affection. Nevertheless those were great days in his calendar on which these missives came. The notes were read over every morning and evening until Constance returned, and were put in a place of safety during the day and night.

George looked forward with the greatest anxiety to Miss Fearing's return. He had long felt that her sister's antagonism was one of the numerous and apparently insurmountable obstacles that barred his path, and he dreaded lest Grace's influence should, in the course of the long summer, so work upon Constance's mind as to break the slender thread that bound her to him. As regards Grace's intention he was by no means wrong. She lost no opportunity of explaining to Constance that her friendship for George Wood was little short of ridiculous, that the man knew he had no future and was in pursuit of nothing but money, that his writings showed that he belonged to the poorest class of amateurs, that men who were to succeed were always heard of

from childhood, at school, at college, and in their first efforts, and that Constance was allowing her good nature to get the better of her common-sense in encouraging such a fellow. In short, there was very little that Grace left unsaid. But, though George had foreseen all this, as Grace, on her part, had determined beforehand upon her course of action during the summer, neither Grace nor George had understood the effect that such talk would produce upon her whom it was meant to influence. There was in Constance's apparently gentle nature an element of quiet resistance which, in reality, it was not hard to rouse. Like many very good and very conscientious people, she detested advice and abominated interference, even on the part of those she loved best. Her attachment for her sister was sincere in its way, though not very strong, and it did not extend to a blind respect for Grace's opinions. Grace could be wrong, like other people, and Grace was hasty and hot-tempered, prejudiced and not free from a certain sort of false pride. These were assuredly not the defects of Constance's character, at least in her own opinion.

Her opposition was aroused and she began to show it. Indeed, her two letters to George were both written immediately after conversations had taken place in which Grace had spoken of him with more than usual bitterness. She felt as though she owed him some reparation for the ill-treatment he got at her sister's hands, and this accounted in part for the flavour of kindness which George detected in her words. The situation was further strained by the arrival of one of the periodicals which contained an article by him. The sisters both read it, and Constance was pleased with it. In an indirect way, too, she felt flattered, for it looked as though George were beginning to follow her advice.

'It is trash,' said Grace authoritatively, as she threw the magazine aside.

Constance allowed a few minutes to elapse before she answered, during which she seemed to be intently watching the sail of a boat that was slowly working its way up the river. The two girls had paused between one visit and another to rest themselves in a place they owned upon the Hudson. The weather was intensely hot, and it was towards evening.

'It is not trash,' said Constance quietly. 'You are quite mistaken. You are completely blinded by your prejudice.'

Grace was very much surprised, for it was unlike Constance to turn upon her in such a way.

'I think it is trash for two reasons,' she said, with a short laugh. 'First, because my judgment tells me it is; and, secondly, because I know that George Wood could not possibly write anything else.'

'You can hardly deny that you are prejudiced after that speech. Do you know what you will do, if you go on in this way? You will make me fall in love with Mr. Wood and marry him, out of sheer contrariety.'

'Oh no!' laughed Grace. 'You would not marry him. At the last minute you would throw him over, and then he would bring an action against you for breach of promise with a view to the damages.'

Constance suddenly grew very pale. She turned from the window where she was standing, crossed the small room and stood still before her sister.

'Do you mean that?' she asked very coldly.

Grace was frightened, for the first time in her life, but she did her best to hide it.

'What difference does it make to you, whether I mean it or not?' she inquired with a rather scornful smile.

'This difference—that if you think such things, you and I may as well part company before we quarrel any further.'

'Ah—you love him, then? I did not know.' Grace laughed nervously.

'I do not love him, but if I did I should not be ashamed to say so to you or to the whole world. But I like him very, very much, and I will not hear him talked of as you talk of him. Do you understand?'

'Perfectly. Nothing could be clearer,' said Grace with a contemptuous curl of the lip.

'Then I hope you will remember,' Constance answered.

Grace did remember. Indeed, for some time she could think of nothing else. It seemed clear enough to her that something more than friendship was needed to account for the emotion she had seen in her sister's face. It was the first time in her recollection, too, that Constance had ever been really angry, and Grace was not inclined to rouse her anger a second time. She changed her tactics and ignored George Wood altogether, never mentioning him nor reading anything that he sent to Constance. But this mode of treating the question proved unsatisfactory, for it was clear that Wood wrote often, and there was nothing to prove that Constance did not answer all his letters. Fortunately the

two sisters were rarely alone together during the rest of the summer, and their opportunities of disagreeing were not numerous. They were not in reality as fond of each other as the world thought, or as they appeared to be. Their natures were too different, and at the same time the difference was not of that kind in which each character seems to fill a want in the other. On the contrary, the points in which they were alike were precisely those which most irritated the other's sensibilities. They had never before quarrelled, nor been so near to a quarrel as they were in the course of the conversation just recorded, but they were in reality very far from being harmonious. The devoted affection of their mother had kept them together while she had lived, and, to some extent, had survived her, the memory of her still exercising a strong influence over both. Constance, too, was naturally very pacific, and rarely resented anything Grace said, in jest or in earnest. Grace was often annoyed by what she called her sister's sweetness, and it was that very quality which prevented the other from retaliating. She had now shown that she could turn, and fiercely, if once aroused, and Grace respected her the more for having shown that she had a temper.

Enough has been said to show that George's fear that Constance would think less well of him through Grace's influence was without foundation. She even went so far as to send for him as soon as she returned to New York in the autumn. It was a strange meeting, for there was constraint on both sides, and at the same time each felt the necessity of showing the other that no change had taken place for the worse in their mutual relations.

Constance was surprised to find how very favourably George Wood compared with the men she had seen during the summer—men all more or less alike in her eyes, but nevertheless representing in her imagination the general type of what the gentleman is supposed to be, the type of the man of her own class, the mate of her own species. Grace had talked so much, in the early part of the season, of George's inferior social position, of his awkward manner, and, generally, of his defects, that Constance had almost feared to find that she had been deceived at first and that there was a little truth in her sister's words. One glance, one phrase of his, sufficed to set her mind at rest. He might have peculiarities, but they were not apparent in his way of dressing, of entering a room, or of pronouncing the English language. He was emphatically what he ought to be, and she felt a keen pleasure in

taking up her intercourse with him at the point where it had been interrupted more than four months earlier.

And now the exigencies of this history require that we should pass rapidly over the period that followed. It was an uneventful time for all concerned. George Wood worked with all his might and produced some very creditable papers on a variety of subjects, gradually attracting a certain amount of notice to himself, and advancing, as he supposed, as fast as was possible in his career. Success of the kind he craved still seemed very far away in the dim future, though there were not wanting those who believed that he might not wait long for it. Foremost among those was Constance Fearing. To her there was a vast difference between the anonymous scribbler of small notices whom she had known a year ago and the promising young writer who appeared to her to have a reputation already, because most of her friends now knew who he was, had read one or more of his articles, and were glad to meet him when occasion offered. She felt, indeed, that he had not yet found out his best talent, but her instinct told her that the time could not be very distant when it would break out of its own impulse and surprise the world by its brilliancy. That he actually possessed great and rare gifts she no longer doubted.

Next to Constance, the Sherrington Trimmis were the loudest in their praise of George's doings. Totty could talk of nothing else when she came to the house in Washington Square, and her husband never failed to read everything George wrote, and to pat him on the back after each fresh effort. Even George's father began to relent and to believe that there might be something in literature after all. But he showed very little enthusiasm until, one day, an old acquaintance with whom he had not spoken for years, crossed the street and shook hands with him, congratulating him upon his boy's 'doing so well.' Then Jonah Wood felt that the load of anxiety he had borne for so many years was suddenly lifted from his shoulders. People thought his boy was 'doing well!' He had not hoped to be told that spontaneously by any one for years to come. The dreary look began to fade out of his gray face, giving way to something that looked very like happiness.

George himself was the least appreciative of his own success. Even Johnson, who was sparing of praise in general, wrote occasional notes in his paper expressive of his satisfaction at his friend's work, and generally containing some bit of delicate criticism or learned reference that lent them weight and caused them to be reprinted into other newspapers.

So the winter came and went again, and the month of May came round once more. George was with Constance one afternoon almost exactly a year from the day on which he had first told her of his love. Their relations had been very peaceful and pleasant of late, though George was not so often alone with her as in former times. The period of mourning for the girls' mother was past and many people came to the house. George himself had gradually made numerous acquaintances and led a more social life than formerly, finding interest, as Johnson had predicted, in watching people instead of poring over books. He was asked to dinner by many persons who had known his father and were anxious to make amends for having judged him unjustly, and when they had once received him into their houses they liked him and did what they could to show it. Moreover, he was modest and reticent in regard to himself, and talked well of current topics. Insensibly he had begun to acquire social popularity and to forget much of his boyish cynicism. He fancied that he went into society merely because it sometimes gave him an opportunity of meeting Constance, but he was too natural and young not to like it for itself.

'Shall we not go out?' he asked, when he found her alone in the drawing-room.

Constance looked up and smiled, as though she understood his thought. He was afraid that Grace would enter the room and spoil his visit, as had happened more than once, and Constance feared the same thing. Neither had ever said as much to the other, but there was a tacit understanding between them, and their intimacy had developed so far that Constance made no secret of wishing to be alone with him when he came to the house. She smiled in spite of herself and George smiled in return.

'Yes. We can take a turn in the Square,' she said. 'It will be—cooler, you know.' A soft laugh seemed to explain the hesitation, and George felt very happy.

A few minutes later they were walking side by side under the great trees. Instinctively they kept away from the Fearings' house—Grace might chance to be at the window.

'It was almost a year ago,' said George suddenly.

'What?'

'That I told you I loved you. You think differently of me now, do you not?'

'A little differently, perhaps,' Constance answered. Then, feeling that she was blushing, she turned her face away and spoke

rapidly. 'Yes and no. I think more of you—that is to say, I think better of you. You have done so much in this year. I begin to see that you are more energetic than I fancied you were.'

'Does it seem to you as though what I have done has brought us any nearer together, you and me?'

'Nearer? Perhaps. I do not quite see how you mean.' The blush had disappeared, and she looked puzzled.

'I mean because I have begun—only begun—to make something like a position for myself. If I succeed I hope we shall seem nearer yet—nearer and nearer—till there shall be no parting at all.'

'I think you mistake a letter in the word. You talk as though you meant dearer, more than nearer—do you not?' Constance laughed, and blushed again.

'If I said that you were making love to me—to-day, as you said a year ago—would you answer that you meant it—as I did?'

'What impertinence!' exclaimed Constance, still laughing lightly.

'No—but would you?'

'I cannot tell what I should do if you said anything so outrageous!'

'I love you! Is that outrageous and impertinent?'

'N—o. You say it very nicely—almost too nicely. I am afraid you have said it before.'

'Often, though I cannot expect you to remember the exact number of repetitions. How would you say it if you were obliged to say it? I have a good ear for a tune. I could learn your music.'

'Could you?' Constance hesitated while they paused in their walk, and George looked into her eyes.

She saw something there that had not been present when he had first spoken, a year ago. He had seemed cold then, even to her inexperience. Now there was both passion and tenderness in his look, and there was sadness in his face.

'You do love me now,' she said softly. 'I can see it.'

'And you, dear; will you not say the little words?'

Again she hesitated. Then she put out her hand and touched his very gently.

'I hate you, sir,' she said. But she pronounced the syllables with infinite softness and delicacy, and the music of her voice could not have been more sweet if she had said 'I love you, dear.' Then she laughed again.

'I could hear you say that very often without being hurt,' said George tenderly.

'I only wanted to show you how I should say those other words if I would,' she answered.

'Is that all? Well—if there is a just proportion between your hatred and your love and your way of expressing them, your love must be——' He stopped.

'Must be what?'

'As great as mine. I cannot find anything stronger than that to say—nor could you, if you knew.'

'So you love me, then. I wonder how long it will last? When did it begin?'

'The second time I saw you.'

'Love at second sight! How romantic—so much more original than at first sight, and so much more natural. No—you must not take my hand—there are people over there—and, besides, there is no reason why you should. I told you I hated you. There—walk like a sensible being and talk about your work!'

'You are a strange creature, Constance.'

'Am I? Why do you call me Constance? I do not call you George—indeed I do not like the name at all.'

'Nor I, if you do not. You can call me Constantine if you like. That name will be more like yours.'

'I do not like my own. It makes me think of the odiously good little girls in story-books. Besides, what is it? Why am I called Constance? Is it for the town in Switzerland? I was never there. Is it for the virtue I least possess?'

'As your sister is called Grace,' suggested George.

'Hush! Grace is a very graceful girl. Take it in that way, and leave her alone. Am I the English for Constantia? Come, give me an explanation. Talk! Say something! You are leaving the burden of the conversation to me, and then you are not even listening!'

'I was thinking of you—I always am. What shall I talk about? You are the only subject on which I could be at all eloquent.'

'You might talk about yourself, for a change,' suggested Constance.

'But you say you hate me, so that you would not find an account of me agreeable, would you?'

'I think my hatred could be made very accommodating, if you would talk pleasantly—even about yourself.'

‘I would rather make love to you than talk.’

‘I have no doubt you would, but that is just what I do not want you to do. Besides, you have done it before—without any result.’

‘That is no reason for not trying again, is it?’

‘Why try it at all?’

‘Love is its own reason,’ said George, ‘and it is the reason for most other things as well. I love you and I am not in search of reasons. I love you very, very much, with all my heart—so much that I do not know how to say it. My life is full of you. You are everywhere. You are always with me. In everything I have done since I have known you I have thought of you. I have asked myself whether this would please you, whether that would bring a smile to your dear face, whether these words or those would speak to your heart and be sweet to you. You are everything the world holds for me, the sun that shines, the air I breathe. Without the thought of you I could neither think nor work. If a man can grow great by the thought of woman’s love, you can make me one of the greatest; if men die of broken hearts, you can kill me. You are everything to me—life, breath, and happiness.’

Constance was silent. He spoke passionately, and there was an accent of truth in his low, vibrating voice that went to her heart. For one moment she almost felt that she loved him in return, as she had often dreamed of loving. That he was even now more to her than any living being she knew already.

‘You like me,’ he said presently. ‘You like me, you are fond of me; you have often told me that I am your best friend—the one of whom you think most. You let me come when I will, you let me say all that is in my heart to say, you let me tell you that I love you——’

‘It is very sweet to hear,’ said Constance softly.

‘And it is sweet to say as well—dearest. Ah, Constance, say it once—say that it is more than friendship, more than liking, more than fondness that you feel. What can it cost you to say it?’

‘Would it make you very happy?’

‘It would make this world heaven.’

Constance stopped in her walk, drew back a little from his side, and looked at him.

‘I will say it,’ she said quietly. ‘I love you—yes, I do. No—do not start—it is not much to hear, you must not be too

hopeful. I will tell you the truth—so, as we stand—no nearer. It is not friendship nor fondness, nor mere liking. It is love, but it is not what it should be. Do you know why I tell you? Because I care too much for your respect to let you think I am a miserable flirt, to let you think that I am encouraging you and drawing you on, without having the least heart in the matter. You must think me very conscientious. Perhaps I am. Yes, I have encouraged you, I have drawn you on, because I like to hear you say what you so often say of late, that you love me. It is very sweet to hear, as I told you just now. And, do you know? I wish I could say the same things to you, and feel them. But I do not love you enough, I am not sure of my love, it is greater to-day and less to-morrow, and I will not give you little where you give me so much. You know my secret now. You may hope, if you will. I am not deceiving you. I may love you more and more, and the day when I feel that it is all strong and true and whole and sound and unchangeable I will marry you. But I will not promise. I will not run the risk so long as I feel that my love may turn again into friendship next week—or next year. Do you see? Have you understood me? Is it all clear now?’

‘I understand your words, dear, but not your heart. I thank you——’

‘No. Do not thank me. Come, let us walk on, slowly. Do you know that it has been the same with you, though you will not admit it? You did not love me a year ago, as you do now, did you?’

‘No. That was impossible. I love you more and more every day, every week, every month.’

‘A year ago it would have been quite possible for you to have forgotten me and loved some other woman. You did not look at me as you do now. Your voice had not the same ring in it.’

‘I daresay not—I have changed. I can feel it.’

‘Yes, and it is because I have watched you changing in one way that I am afraid I may change in the other.’

George was very much surprised and at the same time was made very happy by what she had told him. He had indeed suspected the truth, and it was not enough to have heard her say the words ‘I love you’ in the calm and reasoning tone she had used. But, on the other hand, there was something brilliantly honest about her confession, that filled him with hope and delight. If a woman so true once loved with all her heart she would love

longer and better and more truly than other women can. So at least thought George Wood, as he walked by her side beneath the trees in Washington Square, and glanced from time to time at her lovely blushing face.

‘I thank you, dear, with all my heart,’ he said after a long pause.

‘There is little enough to thank me for. It seems to me that I could not have done less. Would it have been honest and right to let things go on as they were going without an explanation?’

‘Perhaps not. But most women would have done nothing. I understand you better now, I think—if a man can ever understand a woman at all.’

‘I do not understand myself,’ Constance answered thoughtfully. ‘Promise me one thing,’ she added, looking up quickly into his face.

‘Anything in the world,’ he said.

‘Anything? Then promise me that what I have said to-day shall make no difference in the way we meet, and that you will behave just as you did before.’

‘Indeed I will. What difference could it make? I do not see.’

‘Well, it might. Remember that we are not engaged to be married——’

‘Oh, that? Of course not. I am engaged to you, but you are not engaged to me. Is that it?’

‘Better not think of any engagement at all. It can do no good. Love me if you will, but do not consider yourself bound.’

‘If you will tell me how I can love you without feeling bound to you, perhaps I will try and obey your commands. It must be a very complicated thing.’ George laughed happily.

‘Well, do as you will,’ said Constance. ‘Only be honest with me, as I have been with you. If a time comes when you feel that you love me less, tell me so frankly, and let there be an end. Will you?’

‘Yes. I am not afraid. The day will never come.’

‘“Never” is thought to be an old-fashioned word, I believe—like “always.” Will you do something else to please me—something to pay me for my honesty?’

‘Anything—everything.’

‘Write a book, then. It is time you did it.’

George did not answer at once. There was nothing which he

really wished more to accomplish than what Constance asked of him, and yet, in spite of years of literary work and endless preparation, there was nothing for which he really felt himself less fitted. He was conscious that fragments of novels were constantly floating through his brain, and that scenes formed themselves and conversations arranged themselves spontaneously in his mind when he least expected it; but everything was vague and unsettled—he had neither plot nor plan, neither the persons of the drama nor the scene of their action, neither beginning nor continuation, nor end. To promise to write a book now, this very year, seemed like madness. And yet he was beginning to fear lest he should put off the task until it should be too late. He was in his twenty-seventh year, and in his own estimation was approaching perilously near to thirty.

‘Why do you ask me to do it now?’ he inquired.

‘Because it is time, and because, if you go on much longer with these short things, you will never do anything else.’

‘I only do it as a preparation, as a step. Honestly, I do not feel that I know enough to write a good book, and I should be sorry to write a bad one.’

‘Never mind. Make a beginning. It can do no harm to try. You have written a great deal lately, and you can leave the magazines alone for a while. Shall I tell you what I would like?’

‘Yes—what?’

‘I would like you to write your book and bring the chapters as you write them, and read them to me one by one.’

‘Would you really like that?’

‘Indeed I would.’

‘Then I will do it. I mean that I will try, for I am sure I cannot succeed. But—you did not think of that—where can we read without being interrupted? I do not propose to give your sister the benefit—’

‘In Central Park—on fine days. There are quiet places there.’

‘Will you go there with me alone?’ George asked in some surprise.

‘Yes. Why not? Have I not told you that I love you—a little?’

‘I bless you for it, dear!’ said George.

And so they parted.

CHAPTER IX.

GEORGE felt like a man who has committed himself to take part in some public competition although not properly prepared for the contest, and during the night that succeeded his last meeting with Constance he slept little. He had promised to write a book. That was bad enough, considering that he felt so little fitted for the task. But, at least, if he had undertaken to finish the work, revise it and polish it and eliminate all the errors he could discover before bringing it to Miss Fearing in its final shape, he could have comforted himself with the thought that the first follies he committed would be known only to himself. He had promised, however, to read the chapters to Constance as he wrote them, one by one, and the thought filled him with dismay. The charming prospect of numberless meetings with her was marred by the fear of being ridiculous in her eyes. It was for her alone that the book was to be written. It would be a failure and he would not even attempt to publish it, but the certainty that the public would not witness his discomfiture brought no consolation with it. Better a thousand times to be laughed at by the critics than to see a pained look of disappointment in Constance's eyes. Nevertheless he considered his promise sacred, and, after all, it was Constance who had driven him to make it. He had protested his incapacity as well as he could. She would see that he had been right, and would acknowledge the wisdom of waiting a little longer before making the great attempt.

At first he felt as though he were in a nightmare, in a dim labyrinth from which he had pledged himself to find an escape in a given time. His nerves, for the first time in his life, played him false. He grew suddenly hot, and then as suddenly cold again. Attempting to fix his imagination, monstrous faces presented themselves before his eyes in the dark, and he heard fragments of conversation in which there were long sentences that meant nothing. He lit a candle and sat up in bed, clasping his forehead with his long smooth fingers, and beginning to feel that he knew what despair really meant.

This, then, was the result of years of preparation, of patient practice with the pen, of thoughtful reading and careful study! He had always felt that he lacked the imagination necessary for producing a novel, and now he felt sure of it. Johnson had told

him that he was no critic, and he had believed Johnson, because Johnson was himself the best critic he knew. What, then, was he? A writer of short papers and articles. Yes, he could do that. How easily now, at this very moment, could he think of half-a-dozen subjects for such work, and how neatly he could put them into shape, develop them in a certain number of pages and polish them to the proper degree of brilliancy!

The morning dawned and found him still searching and beating his brain for a subject. As the light increased he felt more and more nervous. It was not in his nature to put off the beginning upon which he had determined, and he knew that on that day he must write the first words of his first book or forfeit his self-respect for ever. There was an eminently comic side to the situation, but he could not see it. His dread of being ridiculous in the eyes of the woman he loved was great enough to keep him from contemplating the absurdity of his case. His sensations became intolerable; he felt like a doomed man awaiting his execution, whose only chance of a reprieve lay in inventing a plot for a novel. He could bear it no longer, and he got out of bed and opened his window. The fresh air of the May morning rushed in and suddenly filled the room with sweetness and his excited brain with a new sense of possibilities. He sat down at his table without thinking of dressing himself, and took up his pen. A sheet of paper lay ready before him, and the habit of writing was strong in itself—too strong to be resisted. In a few minutes that white sheet would be covered with words that would mean something, and those words would be the beginning of his book, of the novel he was about to write, but of the contents of which he had not the remotest conception. This was not the way he had anticipated the commencement of the work that was to lay the first stone of his reputation. He had fancied himself sitting down to that first page, calm and collected, armed with a plot already thoroughly elaborated, charmed beforehand with the characters of his own invention, carried away from the first by the spirit of the action, cheered at every page by the certainty of success, because failure was to have been excluded by the multiplicity of his precautions. And here he was, without an idea in his brain or the least subject for an excuse, beginning a romance which was to be judged step by step by the person of all others most dear to him.

George dipped his pen into the ink a second time and then glanced at the calendar. It was the fifth of May.

‘Well,’ he said aloud, ‘there is luck in odd numbers. Here goes my first novel!’

And thereupon, to his own great surprise, he began writing rapidly. He did not know what was coming, he hardly knew whether his hero had black hair or brown, and as for the heroine, he had not thought of her at all. But the hero was himself, and was passing a night of great anxiety and distress in a small room, in a small house, in the city of New York. The reason of his anxiety and distress was a profound secret as yet, because George had not invented it, but there was no difficulty in depicting his state of mind. The writer had just spent that very night himself, and was describing it while the sun was yet scarcely risen. He chuckled viciously as he drove his pen along the lines and wrote out the ready phrases that rushed into his brain. It was inexpressibly comic to be giving all the details of his hero’s suffering without having the smallest idea of what caused it; but, as he went on, he found that his silence upon this important point was lending an uncanny air of mystery to his first chapter, and his own interest was unexpectedly aroused.

It seemed strange, too, to find himself at liberty to devote as much space as he pleased to the elaboration of details that attracted his attention, and to feel that he was not limited in space as he had hitherto been in all he wrote. Of course, when he stopped to think of what he was to do next, he was as much convinced as ever that nothing could come of his attempt beyond this first chapter. The whole affair was like a sort of trial gallop over the paper, and doubtless, when he read over what he had written, he would be convinced of its worthlessness. He remembered his first fiery article upon the critics, and the wholesale cutting and pruning it had required before he could even submit it to Johnson. Then, however, he had written under the influence of anger; now, he was conscious of a new pleasure in every sentence, his ideas came smoothly to the surface, and his own language had a freshness which he did not recognise. In old times he had studied the manner of great writers in the attempt to improve his own, and his style had been subject to violent attacks of Carlyle and to lucid intervals of Macaulay, he had worshipped at Ruskin’s exquisite shrine and had offered incense in Landor’s classic temple, he had eaten of Thackeray’s salt and had drunk long draughts from Dickens’s loving-cup. Perhaps each had produced its effect, but now he was no longer conscious of receiving influence from any of them. For the first time in his life he

was himself, for better, for worse, to fail or to succeed. His soul and his consciousness expanded together in a new and intoxicating life, as he struck those first reckless strokes in the delicious waters of the unknown.

He forgot everything—dress, breakfast, his father, the time of day and the time of year, and when he rose from his seat he had written the first chapter of his novel. For some occult reason he had stopped suddenly and dropped his pen. He knew instinctively that he had reached his first halting-place, and he paused for breath, left the table and went to the window. To his astonishment the sun was already casting shadows in the little brick yard, and he knew that it must be past noon. He looked at himself and saw that he was not dressed, then he looked at his watch and found that it was one o'clock. He rubbed his eyes, for it had all been like a dream, like a vision of fairyland, like a night spent at the play. On the table lay many pages of closely-written matter, numbered and neatly put together by sheer force of habit. He hardly knew what they contained, and he was quite unable to recall the words that opened the first paragraph. But he knew the last sentence by heart, for it was still ringing in his brain, and, strange to say, he knew what was to come next, though he seemed not to have known it so long as he held his pen. While he dressed himself the whole book, confused in its details but clear in its general outline, presented itself to his contemplation, and he knew that he should write it as he saw it. It would assuredly not be a good novel, it would never be published, and he was wasting his time, but it would be a book, and he should keep his promise to Constance. He went downstairs and found his father at luncheon, with a newspaper beside him.

'Well, George,' said the old gentleman, 'I thought you were never going to get up.'

'I am not quite sure that I have been to bed,' answered the young man. 'But I know that I have been writing since it was daylight and have had no breakfast.'

'That is a bad way of beginning the day,' said Jonah Wood, shaking his head. 'You will derange your digestion by these habits. It is idle to try such experiments on the human frame.'

'It was quite an unwilling experiment. I forgot all about eating. I had some work that had to be done, and so I put it through.'

'More articles?' inquired his father with kindly interest.

'I believe I am writing a book,' said George. 'It is a new

sensation, and very exhilarating, but I cannot tell you anything about it till I have got on with it further.'

'A book, eh? Well, I wish you success, George. I hope you are well prepared, and that you will do nothing hasty or ill-considered.'

'No, indeed!' exclaimed George with a laugh.

Hasty and ill-considered! Could any two epithets better describe the way in which he had gone to work? What rubbish it would be when it was finished, he thought, as he attacked the cold meat and pickles. He realised that he was desperately hungry, and unaccountably gay considering that he anticipated a total failure, and it was surprising that, while he believed that he had been producing trash, he should be in such a hurry to finish his meal in order to produce more. Nothing, however, seemed to be of the slightest importance, except to write as fast as he could in order to have plenty of manuscript to read to Constance at the first opportunity.

That night before going to bed he sat down in a comfortable chair, lit a pipe and read over what he had written. It must be very poor stuff, of course, he considered, because he had turned it out so quickly; but he experienced one of the great pleasures of his life in reading it over. The phrases sent thrills of satisfaction through him, and his hand trembled as he took up one sheet after another. It was strange that he should be able to take such delight in what must manifestly be so bad. But, bad or not, the thing was alive, and the characters were his companions, whispering in his ear the words that they were to speak, and bringing with them their individual atmospheres, while a sort of secondary and almost unconscious imagination performed the scene-shifting in a smooth and masterly fashion.

Three days later, he sat beside Constance Fearing upon a wooden bench in a retired nook in Central Park. The weather was gloriously beautiful, and the whole world smelt of violets and sunshine. Everything was fresh and peaceful, and the stillness was broken only by the voices of laughing children who played together a hundred yards away from where the pair were sitting.

'And now, begin,' said Constance eagerly, as George produced his folded manuscript.

'It is horrible stuff,' he said. 'I had really much rather not read it.'

'Shall I go away?'

'No.'

‘Then read!’

A great wave of timidity came over the young man in that moment. He could not account for it, for he had often read to Constance the manuscript of his short articles. But this seemed very different. He let the folded sheets rest on his knee and gazed into the distance, seeing nothing and wishing that he might sink through the earth into his own room. To judge from the sensation in his throat, he would not be able to read at all. Then all at once he grew cold. He had undertaken to do this thing and he must carry it through, come what might. Constance would not laugh at him, and she would be just. He wished that she were Johnson, for it would be easier.

‘I am waiting,’ she said with a gentle smile. George laughed.

‘I never was so frightened in my life,’ he said. ‘I know what stage fright is now.’

Constance looked at him, and she liked his timidity more than she had often liked his boldness. She felt that she loved him a little more than before. Her voice was very soft when she spoke.

‘Are you afraid of me, dear?’ she asked.

The blood came to George’s face. It was the first time she had ever used an endearing expression in speaking to him.

‘Not since you have said that,’ he answered, opening the sheets.

He read the first chapter, and she did not interrupt him. Occasionally he glanced at her face. It was very grave and thoughtful, and he could not guess what was passing in her mind.

‘That is the end of the first chapter,’ he said at last. ‘Do you like it?’

‘Go on!’ she exclaimed quickly, without heeding his question.

George did as he was bidden, and read on to the end of what he had brought. Whatever Constance might think of the work, she was evidently anxious to hear it, and this fact at least gave him a little courage. When he had finished, he folded up the sheets quickly and returned them to his pocket, without looking at his companion’s face. He did not dare ask her again for her opinion, and he waited for her to speak. But she said nothing and leaned back in her seat, apparently contemplating the trees.

‘Would you like to walk a little?’ George asked in an unsteady voice. He now took it for granted that she was not pleased.

‘Do you want to know what I think of your three chapters?’

‘Yes, please,’ he answered nervously.

‘They are very, very good. They are as much better than

anything you have ever done before as champagne is better than soda-water.'

'Not really!' George exclaimed in genuine and overwhelming surprise. 'You are not in earnest?'

'Indeed I am,' Constance answered with some impatience. 'Do you think I would say such a thing if I were not sure of it? Do you not feel it yourself? Did you not know it when you were writing?'

'No—I thought, because it was written so fast, it could not be worth much. Indeed, I think so still—I am afraid that you are——'

'Mistaken?'

'Perhaps—carried away because you like me, or because you think I ought to write well.'

'Nonsense. Promise me that you will not show this book to anyone until it is quite finished. I want you to take my word for it, to believe in my judgment, because I know I am right. Will you?'

'Of course I will. To whom should I show it? I think I should be ashamed.'

'You need not be ashamed if you go on in that way. When will you have written more?'

'Give me three days—that will give you three chapters at least and take you well into the story. You are not going out of town yet?'

'I shall not go until it is finished,' said Constance with great determination. She had made up her mind that George would write better if he wrote very fast, and she meant to urge him to do his utmost.

'But that may take a long time,' he objected.

'No, it will not,' she answered. 'You would not keep in New York when it is too hot, would you?'

'I will do my best,' said George.

He kept his word, and three weeks later he sat in his room, in the small hours of the morning, writing the last page of his first novel. He was in a state of indescribable excitement, though he seemed to be no longer thinking at all. The pen seemed to do the work of itself, and he followed the words that appeared so quickly with a feverish interest. He had not the least idea how it would all look when it was done, but something told him that it was being done in the right way. His hand flew from side to side of the paper, and then stopped suddenly, why, he could not

tell. It was not possible that there should be nothing more to say, no more to add, not one word to make the completion more complete. He collected his thoughts and read the page over carefully to the end. No—there was nothing wanting, and one word more would spoil the conclusion.

‘I do not understand why, I am sure,’ he said to himself. ‘But that is the end, and there is no doubt about it. So here it goes! “George—Winton—Wood—May 29th.”’

He pushed the sheet away from him. Rather theatrical, he thought, to sign his name to it, as though it were a real book, and as though the manuscript were worth keeping. He had done it all to please Constance, and Constance was pleased. In twenty-four days he had concocted a novel—and he had never in his life enjoyed twenty-four days so much. That was because he had seen Constance so often and because this wretched scroll had amused her. Would she like the last three chapters? Of course she would. He would take her the whole manuscript and make her a present of it. That was all it could be good for. To publish such stuff would be folly, even if any publisher could be found to abet such madness. On the whole, he would prefer to throw the whole into the fire. Nobody could tell. He might be famous some day in the far future, and then, when he was dead and gone, and could not interfere any longer, some abominable literary executor would get hold of this thing and print it, and show the world what an egregious ass the celebrated George Winton Wood had been when he was a very young man. But Constance could have it if she liked, on condition that it was never shown to anybody.

Thereupon George tumbled into bed and slept soundly until ten o’clock on the following morning, when he gathered up his manuscript, tied it up into a neat bundle, and went to meet Constance at their accustomed trysting-place in the Park.

There were some very striking passages towards the conclusion of the book, and George read them as well as he could. Indeed, as many of the best speeches were put into the mouth of the hero and were supposed to be addressed to the lady of his affections, George found it very natural to speak them to Constance and to give them a very tender emphasis. It was clear, too, that Constance understood the real intention of the love-making, and, to all appearance, appreciated it, for the colour came and went softly in her face, and there was sometimes a little moisture in her eyes and sometimes a light that is not caused by mere interest in an

everyday novel. George wrote better than he talked, as many men do who are born writers. There was music in his phrases, but it was the music of pure nature and not the rhythm of a studied prose. That was what most struck the attention of the young girl who sat beside him, drinking in the words which she knew were meant for her, and which she felt were more beautiful than anything she had heard before.

To tell the truth, though she had spoken her admiration very frankly and forcibly, she was beginning to doubt her own ability to judge of the work. If George's talent were really as great as it now seemed to her, how had it remained concealed so long? There had been nothing to compare with this in his numerous short writings. Was this because they had not been addressed to herself, or was it for this very reason that his novel was so much more fascinating? Or was it really because he had at last found out his strength and was beginning to use it like a giant? She could not tell. She confessed to herself that she had assumed much in setting up her judgment as a standard for him in the matter. The more he had read, the more she had been amazed at his knowledge of things and men, at his easy versatility, and at the power he displayed in the more dramatic parts of the book. Of one thing she felt sure. The book would be read and would be liked by the class of people with whom she associated. What the critics might think or say about it was another matter.

She had been prepared for something well done at the last, but she had not anticipated the ending—that ending which had so much surprised the writer himself in his inexperience of his own powers. His voice trembled as he read the last page, and he was not even conscious of being ashamed of showing so much feeling about the creatures of his imagination. He was aware, as in a dream, that Constance's small hand was tightly clasped in his while he was reading, and then, as his voice ceased, he felt her head resting against his shoulder. She was looking down, and he could only see that there was colour in her face, but as he gazed at the tiny fair curls that were just visible to him he saw a crystal tear fall upon his rough sleeve and glisten in the May sunlight.

'You have dropped one of your diamonds,' he said softly. 'Is it for me—or for the man in the book?'

She looked up into his face with a happy smile.

'You should know best,' she answered.

Her face was very near to his, and though his came nearer,

she did not draw hers away. George forgot the nurses and the children in the distance. If all his assembled acquaintances had been drawn up in ranks before him he would have forgotten their presence too. His lips touched her cheek, not timidly, nor roughly either, though he felt for one moment that his blood was on fire. Then she drew back quickly and took her hand from his.

'It is very wrong of me,' she said. 'Perhaps I shall never love you enough for that.'

'How can you say so? Was it for the man in the book, then, after all?'

'I do not know—forget it. It may come some day——'

'Is it nearer than it was? Is it any nearer?' George asked very tenderly.

'I do not know. I am very foolish. Your book moved me, I suppose—it is so grand, that last part, where he tells her the truth, and she sees how noble he has been all through.'

'I am glad you have liked it so much. It was written to amuse you, and it has done that, at all events. So here it is. Do you care to keep it?'

Constance looked at him in surprise, not understanding what he meant.

'Of course I want it,' she answered. 'After it is printed, give it back to me.'

'Printed!' exclaimed George contemptuously. 'Do you think anybody would publish it? Do you really think I would offer it to anybody?'

'You are not serious?' said the young girl, staring at him.

'Indeed I am in earnest. Do you believe a novel can be dashed off in that way, in three or four weeks, and be good for anything? Why, it needs six months at least to write a book!'

'What do you call this?' Constance asked, growing suddenly cold and taking the manuscript from his hands.

'Not a book, certainly. It is a scrawl of some sort, a little better than a dime novel, a little poorer than the last thrilling tale in a cheap weekly. Whatever it is, it is not a publishable story.'

Constance could not believe her ears. She did not know whether to be angry at his persistent contempt of her opinion, or to be frightened at the possibility of his being right.

'We cannot both be right,' she said at last, with sudden energy. 'One of us two must be an idiot—an absolute idiot—'

and—well, I would rather not think that I am the one, you know.'

George laughed and tried to take the manuscript back, but she held it behind her and faced him.

'What are you going to do with it?' he asked, when he saw that she was determined to keep it.

'I will not tell you. Did you not say you had written it for me?'

'Yes, but for you alone.'

'Not at all. It is my property, and I will make any use of it I like.'

'Please do not show it to anyone,' he said very earnestly.

'I promise nothing. It is mine to dispose of as I see fit.'

'Let me look over it at least—I am sure it is full of bad English, and there are lots of words left out, and the punctuation is erratic. Give me that chance.'

'No; I will not. You can do it on the proof. You are always telling me what you do on the proofs of things.'

'Constance! For heaven's sake give it back to me and think no more about it.'

'Do you love me?'

'You know I do——'

'And do you want me to love you?—I may, you know.'

'I want nothing else. But, Constance, I beg of you——'

'Then apply your gigantic intellect to the contemplation of what concerns you. To be short, mind your own business, and go home.'

'Please——'

'If you are not gone before I count five I shall hate you. I am beginning—one—two——'

'Well, there is one satisfaction,' said George, abandoning the contest; 'if you send it to a publisher to read you will never see it again, nor hear of it.'

'I will stand over him while he reads it,' said Constance, laughing. 'If you are good you can take me to the carriage—if not, go away.'

George walked by her side and helped her into the brougham that waited for her a short distance from the place where they had sat. He was utterly overcome by the novelty of the situation, and did not even attempt to speak.

'It is a great book,' said Constance, speaking through the open window after he had shut the door. 'Tell him to go home.'

‘I do not care a straw what it is, so long as it has pleased you.
—Home, John!’

‘Yes, sir.’

And away the carriage rolled. Constance had not determined what she should do with her prize, but she was not long in making up her mind. George had often spoken of his friend Johnson, and had shown her articles written by him. It struck her that he would be the very person to whom she might apply for help. George would never suspect her of having gone to him, and, from all accounts, he was an extremely reticent and judicious personage. She told the coachman to drive her to the office of the newspaper to which Johnson belonged, and to beguile the time she began to read the manuscript over again from the beginning. When the carriage stopped she did not know that she had been driving for more than an hour since she had left George standing in the road in the Park.

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

SOME NOVELS.

THERE exists, I am informed, a popular superstition that I generally review each of Mr. Haggard's novels in from nine to twenty-nine several places. This is not precisely accurate—much the contrary; but I see no reason why I should not review his *Eric Brighteyes*¹ once, if I please. About one thing I am quite certain—the end of this century may like Eric or may dislike him, but he would have been highly popular in Icelandic circles some six hundred years ago. Jan, the thrall, who is said to have told the history, in which he took a sad part, must have received plenty of gold rings for his pains, and must have lived in comfortable winter quarters. This may not have consoled him for the memory of his revealing Eric's secret, at Swanhild's threat, but perhaps no man would hold his peace when threatened with the torture of Wolf the Unwashed. What that was may be read in Sir George Dasent's *Story of Burnt Njal*—a modern novelist or a modern writer cannot be more explicit. *Eric*, then, I think, would assuredly have shared the success of the *Njala* and *Grettla*. It contains the elements of a good saga: plenty of fighting, a brave man's battle with fate, an evil witch-woman, ghosts of that strange material character which peopled the Icelandic imagination. The humour of Skallagrim the Baresark is the right Icelandic humour—cruel and keen, and the loyalty of that unlucky axe-wielder would make Norsemen forgive his fatal love of ale. Skallagrim is among Mr. Haggard's best men; a critic might call him a Norse Umslopogaas, but such characters were by no means uncommon and were highly respected when once they ceased to be Baresarks, or furious masterless bullies.

The difficulties of Mr. Haggard's enterprise were very great indeed. I do not say that he has overcome them all; perhaps they were not all to be overcome. First, it is hard to interest a

¹ Longmans.

modern audience in these old Northern ancestors of ours. Psychology they had none, for personal influence they substituted witchcraft, and the craft of their witches was peculiarly gross and palpable. Their evil passions took the visible shapes of familiar spiritual beasts, wolves, rats, and what not. Their very ghosts fought hard, and could be wounded, or even slain with the second death that does not die. They believed in dreams, in second-sight, in the apparitions of Norns and Valkyries, in the songs of the dead Gummar, well content within his howe. These beliefs are dead, less picturesque bogies have taken their place. Then the endless vendettas, the blood-feuds, are unknown to us, except in Corsica, though Mark Twain shows us how they prevailed on the banks of the Mississippi fifty years ago. The question of style is another difficulty. Perhaps you cannot tell a tale of these days in a modern manner, yet Mr. Morris is accused of being too archaic in the language of his saga library. Perhaps the same accusation may be brought against the manner of *Eric*, yet it is not easy to see how a more modern strain could seem appropriate. Once more, we want a love-story in a romance, and of love (except in the purely mythical *Volsunga*) the Icelanders thought little, or said little. Litigation, with them, holds the place which love holds with us, but not even the science of Maurer could make much Icelandic legal business enchanting to novel readers. Finally, sagas never, or hardly ever, 'end well.' Fate is too much for the righteous and peaceful Njal, as for the stern Skarphedinn, and the chivalrous Gunnar, and that rude champion, Grettir, and the brave young Olaf, Howard's son. Fate dogs Eric Brighteyes, too, from his birth: a life of trial and of battle, a long wooing, and one hour of dear-bought love, and a warrior's death, were what the Norns had in store for him. Many single adventures in his career of adventure are, to my mind, excellent, and worthy of the North. The all but deathly love-scene in the snow; the descent of Golden Foss; the first meeting with the Baresark; the storming of his cavern; the fight at sea, and the escape of Eric and Skallagrim, as of Signy and Sinfiotli, from bondage; the walking of Swanhild's spectre on the waters; the scene of the dead mother; the dealings with Gudruda in the cave, and all the fateful end after Skallagrim's unhappy drinking bout; his repentance; the wrath and forgiveness of Eric—these things seem to me good examples of the saga; more or better can be said of no work. But then a distinguished critic, Mr. Oswald Crawford, has recently declared that sagas are pointless, and prolix, and something else be-

ginning with 'p,' which I have forgotten. This is probably an ultimate question of personal taste; for my own part, I would that I found most three-volume novels as devoid of prolixity, as much to the point, as apt to stir the blood, and to move the *lacrymæ rerum*, as I find many sagas, *Eric* among the rest. There are, perhaps, passages which seem scarcely correct in treatment. Of all literature, the saga is the least exclamatory, the least rhetorical. In *Eric* there are passages too rhetorical and too descriptive for my own taste. I do not feel as if the Finnish witch-wife, Groa, were a success. There may be speeches too oratorical. One cannot, however, blame *Eric* for singing songs in praise of his own prowess. From Lamech to Alan Breck, nay, to Jacky, the black fellow in *Never too Late to Mend*, these impulsive natural heroes, like the Paladins of Charlemagne, all boasted themselves after battle. *Eric* would have been no Norseman of his age if he had refrained. To the best of my knowledge, the novel is a correct picture of heroic life in Iceland, as conceived of by the immediate descendants of the men who lived it. I doubt whether the hell-shoon were bound on the feet of dead women; except for that detail, I see no error in the *Realien*. And when Gudruda goes up to cut the long hair of the fever-stricken *Eric*, when she sits through all the silver northern night above the slain who died at her bridal, as when Hal cuts the grappling iron, and Skallagrim drinks at his last lonely bout, and strikes his last stroke, I feel that all this is real; that this has been so; or so has seemed, in the eyes of men from whom we draw our own lives. It is a great saga, as far as I can judge of sagas, and in the last six hundred years no man but Mr. Haggard could have written it. With Icelanders he is at home, and, as it were, in the native air of his imagination.

I have not for long been more entertained than by Mr. Hutchinson's *Creatures of Circumstance*.¹ All the works of the eminent golfer, whom the world calls, 'for love and for euphony, Horace,' are genial, but this is by far his best essay in fiction. There is not much of a plot (though Mr. Hutchinson keeps his eye steadily on his hero's character and its development). There is no skill in construction, but there is very great skill in the introduction of lively bits of narrative. The old cricketing sexton, Mr. Slocombe, is a gem; so is the explosive Colonel, with his empty sleeve full of cheroots. The fun to be got out of glass eyes seems limited, but the accident to the Colonel's glass eye

¹ Longmans.

makes one laugh an old-fashioned laugh. Mrs. Etheredge is very like some people we meet, especially when she is a mass of 'golden hysterics.' Fortunately we do not often meet ladies who give themselves their heads quite so freely as Sybil. She is unmaidenly with Lord Morningham—very; but there is a dash of wild humour in the pre-nuptial contract which she writes out for him, that makes even so violent a scene not unendurable. Of humour, the character of Mr. Cheadle is full. His son is an excellent and most original study. The American scenes are fresh and full of life. The Creature is a mystery, like Sybil's final mysticism, but 'How they lost the Creature' is a wonderful piece of description. Whether the hero, a cricketer of almost godlike prowess, would, could, or should have written that false letter to Sybil, who can say? We mortals eternally do the wrong and the unexpected thing, the thing we could have sworn that *we* would never do. It was 'faith unfaithful'—we cannot say that it was impossible. Mr. Hutchinson gets into a few bunkers, and other hazards, but he plays out of them very cleverly. There is passion in the book, there is humour, there is kindness, and there is more of the modern disagreeable than I like, but many readers like it. The comparison of a sonnet to a hard-boiled egg will delight all disdainers of sonnets, which, certainly, are 'very filling at the price.' Distinctly we may applaud and thank Mr. Hutchinson at the close of his round. He amuses us. He makes us laugh. He takes us out of ourselves, and he has an elfish knowledge of new Companies, Limited, which can only have been acquired by great study and at much expense. Next time, if there is to be another time, perhaps he may be less frankly careless of construction, and a trifle less facetious in manner, now and then.

* * *

'Q.'s' Romance, *The Splendid Spur*, was such a delightful novel that all its readers must have hurried to acquire his *Noughts and Crosses*.¹ I own that I am a little disappointed in *Noughts and Crosses*. They are brief and usually bizarre stories and sketches, which a little remind one of tales by M. Coppée. *The Outlandish Ladies* is a trifle too outlandish. *Fortunio*, equally odd, is much more poetic, one of the best where all have a strange original poetry of their own. There seems to be no limit to Q.'s varieties of fiction. His *Contes*, however, fall short of M. Paul Bourget's ten new ones, *Nouveaux Pastels*, which are delightful

¹ Cassells,

examples in their kind. From Q. we want to hear more about the fortunes of his Jack Marvell, of the Yorkshire Marvells, late scholar of Trinity. Jack and his companions were real people, not like a lady leper from San Domingo, stranded, somehow, in Cornwall. It is not that we are ungrateful for the very odd and original *Noughts and Crosses*. But Q. can play at a much better game than that pastime of school-hours.

* * *

THE MERRY BEGGAR.¹

I brave the day, I brave the night,
 I throw my sorrows to the wind,
 And try to keep a cheerful mind,
 Although my coat is thin and light,
 Although my hat
 Is wondered at,
 Because I shaved the outer rim
 To try and keep it smooth and trim.

I laugh and sing and whistle too
 When I have wind enough to spare,
 But in the sharp and frosty air
 My breath comes short, my nose turns blue,
 My fingers freeze,
 And my poor knees
 Would knock together did they dare,
 But still I keep a jaunty air.

When bread is scarce and shelter poor
 I watch the sparrows, and I say
 'I only want a meal a day.'
 And if they turn me from the door
 I tramp for weeks,
 And dodge the beaks,
 And with no money for a bed
 I try an archway or a shed.

I brave the day, I brave the night;
 I throw my sorrows to the wind,
 'Tis wise to keep a cheerful mind
 And screw your courage for the fight.
 And so, kind sir,
 In case you err,
 With over-pity, worse than none,
 Just hand a copper and have done.

NINA F. LAYARD.

¹ A fact.

Mr. Grant Allen lately enlivened society by the assertion that out of every twenty girls whom he sits next at dinner in London, nineteen are Hedda Gablers. Miss Gabler, in case any reader does not know her history, was a young woman who flirted with a dissipated literary gentleman till she deemed it expedient to marry an archæologist who was an idiot; she, later, to gain her private ends, intoxicated the literary gentleman who had taken the blue ribbon, burned the MS. of his book, which he had dropped in the mud, induced him to shoot himself, and blew her own foolish brains out. That was all. Now, how fortunate is Mr. Grant Allen, who, nineteen times in twenty, when he dines out, enjoys the society of a Hedda ('born Gabler'). A fogey, like him who writes, never sits next a girl at all at dinner. Matrons fall to our elderly lot. We know not what manner of women the maidens are. We can only take Mr. Allen's word for it that they are Heddas. Perhaps we are more fortunate than we deem. After a dinner in Hedda's intoxicating society, one might drink too much punch (punch!), might carry about the MS. of our work on 'Palæolithic Problems,' might drop it in the mud, and might blow one's foolish brains out. No danger of these results while we are confined to the conversation of the British matron.

* * *

Scene: The Abyss of Bayswater.¹ Dinner. Soup. Lui. Elle (the Britannic matron). He is wearied to death before dinner begins; she is perfectly fresh.

Lui. How dreadfully cold the weather still is!

Elle. Yes, and that horrid influenza! I am not afraid of it for *myself*, but with six little girls and five boys . . .

Lui (aside). She is making for the usual weeds. Her children, of course. Must try to hold her hard. (*Aloud.*) It is a terrible scourge of Nature, influenza. They say it is due to the Manchester Ship Canal. It is like Tenterden Steeple and the Goodwin Sands, isn't it?

Elle (hopelessly bewildered). It begins with a pain between the eyes. To-day my fourth little boy frightened me so by complaining of a pain there. I was quite *relieved* to find that his elder brother had hit him with a stick. . . .

Lui (aside. Must drag her out of the nursery). Perhaps the little boy was practising a golf swing with a walking-stick. Remember being cut over like that myself when a child. Is Mr. Gabler a golfer?

¹ This is plagiarised from Mrs. Browning's scene in the Abyss of Space.—P.M.G.

Elle. Oh no. Mr. Gabler wished to learn, but I cannot bear seaside places. The water always makes me so anxious with so many children. My little fellows are so reckless. I always insist on passing our holidays in a perfectly flat country, where there are no rocks to fall off, and no seas or rivers to fall into.

Lui. And no trees to climb. . . .

Elle. Yes, no trees—horrid trees! My third little girl . . .

Lui (*growing frantic*). That kind of country is certainly very convenient for perambulators. And how does Mr. Gabler amuse himself?

Elle. Oh, he walks to the station and gets the newspapers. He wished to take some shooting, but I said No, I could not have gunpowder in the house. My eldest boy . . .

Lui. Talking about gunpowder, what a capital picture of a battle in the Khyber that by Mr. Vereker Hamilton is, in the Academy—full of light, and really like the appearance of war. Did you notice it?

Elle. No, I can't bear these dreadful things. *My* favourite in the Academy is that delightful picture of those five dear children, all in one frame. I said at once I must have that artist—I don't remember his name—to do my eleven. My third little girl . . .

Lui. How lucky you are to have a whole Eleven. Do you take an interest in cricket?

Elle. Not yet, but when my eldest boy goes to Repby . . .

Lui. Repby! where they killed the boy . . .

Elle. How?

Lui (*gloomily, and quoting the waiter in David Copperfield*). With wopping!

(Devotes the rest of the horrible function to a fancy picture of bullying and starvation at schools.)

* * *

Some critic has been saying that the maiden is 'played out' for the purposes of the novelist. Our romances are to be about married ladies. But what can be made of the British matron in romance? She is the best, the very best of mothers, but she does not lend herself to intrigue, nor does she shine in dialogue.

ANDREW LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following amounts. Contributions received after June 9 will be entered in the August number :—

A Family (Adelaide), 2*l.* Isabel (Night Refuge), 5*s.* Mrs. R. Hannen, 8*s.*
S. B. D. (Dieppe), a comforter.

Received at S. Katherine's Restaurant during May :—

Very nice men's clothing from E. H. Useful clothing from Bedford. Very nice men's things for 'Donna' Refuge (no name).

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

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DIARRHŒA, DYSENTERY, GENERAL BOARD OF HEALTH, LONDON, REPORT that it ACTS as a CHARM, one dose generally sufficient. Dr. GIBBON, Army Medical Staff, Calcutta, states: "2 DOSES COMPLETELY CURED ME OF DIARRHŒA." From SYMES & Co., Pharmaceutical Chemists, Simla, Jan. 5, 1880. To J. T. DAVENPORT, London.

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London: LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO., 39 Paternoster Row
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Thoughts, like Snowflakes on some far-off Mountain Side, go on Accumulating till some great Truth is loosened, and Falls like an Avalanche on the Watting World.



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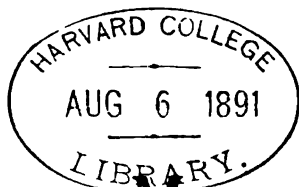
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1891.

The Mischief of Monica.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

'IT WASN'T VERY PLEASANT TO HEAR THEM!'

Such little wasps! And yet so full of spite!
For bulk mere insects—yet in mischief strong.—TATE.

'WELL, she was a pretty creature, I will say that of Monica Lavenham.'

Mrs. George Schofield sat and sighed in her easy chair the day after Flodden Hall had been deserted. 'No wonder poor cousin Joseph was so set upon her,' continued she, after a pause. 'She was enough to turn the head of any man. Oh, George,' as her son entered, 'I was talking to Daisy here about the Lavenham girls; have you heard about them? They're off, you know. Off last night, bag and baggage. Daisy has had a letter from Monica—a really nice, affectionate letter—written just before they started, and posted in London on their arrival there late last night. It must have been posted at the station. We sent for our letters this afternoon; and lucky we did, or we should have heard nothing till to-morrow, and people might have been talking to us, and we not knowing—but, however, no one has been here. I daresay you may have heard, though?' as he betrayed no surprise. 'I heard,' he said, succinctly, and came and stood in front of the fire.

'Well, as I was saying to Daisy,' proceeded his mother, with whom this was a favourite formula, 'that Monica was a pretty creature. To see her fly up into her saddle was a sight in itself; and though I did feel that perhaps poor cousin Joseph made more fuss about the two of them than he need have done—like princesses of the blood royal, I am sure they were kept,—but, however, 'tis ill speaking harm of the dead,—and to be sure they were his own sister's only children,—and anyhow he has left them nothing.'

No response. George stood still upon the hearthrug. He had not even taken off his hat or great-coat, and his newspapers and stick were in his hand. His mother, observing him, thought that George looked tired. Daisy, it must be confessed, thought only that his hat was stuck on the back of his head, and that she had often wished he would not stick it there when Dorrien was by. She had become painfully alive to her eldest brother's deficiencies, and often marvelled how it seemed he was himself so little aware of them. To come straight into his mother's drawing-room, hatted, gloved, and great-coated, with strong, dirty boots that left their marks upon everything with which they came in contact! To stand stupidly stock-still, taking no notice of his mother, nor of herself; to be full of his own tiresome affairs, as he always was; to be caring about those of no one else, as he never did; to be listening to nobody, responding to nothing! She got up and left the room, out of patience with such surly, selfish doltishness.

As soon as she was gone, George moved a pace nearer to his mother.

'Do you know what they say about Dorrien?' he began abruptly.

Mrs. Schofield started. Daisy had desired her to know nothing about Dorrien. She and Daisy had had a talk together on the subject, and come to an understanding at last. Neither however had taken George into account.

'They say that he—and Monica——,' and the young man stopped, as if he had said enough.

'Oh, he and Monica,' rejoined his mother, feebly. ('Dear me! I wish Daisy would come in again,' with some internal perturbation.) 'Well, what about him and Monica?' proceeded she, after a momentary hesitation.

'Lionel Carnforth told me. Mother, did you know?' and she was subjected to a glance so searching that her discomfiture was at once penetrated.

‘Well, yes, I knew; that is to say, I knew in a kind of way, George’: Mrs. Schofield shuffled in her chair: ‘I knew that there was something,—and, at any rate, I knew that Daisy——,’

—‘I thought he was on with Daisy,’ burst forth her son. ‘I was told so; you said so; everybody made out that it was so. He used to be over here every day of the week, and I was bidden to get out of the way. Daisy used to try to keep me indoors when I came out in the evening, and all. If he was after Daisy, how could he be after—anyone else?’ jerking off one of the mantel-piece ornaments with a sudden movement.

‘Goodness gracious! George, what are you doing? Lucky for you that I was here. It would have broken all to pieces if I had not caught it,’ cried his mother, replacing the piece of china which had fallen into her lap. ‘That stick of yours——,’

—‘Never mind—never mind.’ He threw it down impatiently, and tossed his hat after it. ‘Tell me the truth about this business, will you? Is Dorrien to marry Daisy or——?’ and he looked the rest.

‘It is all at an end between him and Daisy,’ replied Mrs. Schofield with emphasis and a suitably lowered tone; ‘and between you and me, George, I am not sorry for it. I had begun to feel squeamish about the Dorrien connection. Ever since that day we were over at Cullingdon, when I fancied a change in the young man’s manner. And what is more, I fancied it in Daisy’s manner too. She as good as confessed to me just now that I was right. She says she would rather keep close about it, and I am not to question her; but it is over and done with, and that’s all about it. Of course I can say no more,—and indeed I want to say no more. There is as good as he to be had any day, and Daisy has always her grandfather’s money. I can’t deny that I was pleased at first, and would have liked a girl of mine to be ‘my lady’ well enough; but, George, that place of theirs is in dreadful need of repair; and I do assure you, George, I can’t but think that Sir Arthur and his lady would never have been so civil as they were to me and mine, but that they thought so too.’

‘All of this is nothing,’ said he, frowning; ‘it is not what I want to know. I——,’

—‘Why, it is just what you asked me about, my dear! You said these very words, “Is he on with Daisy?” or something of the kind. You would not have been best pleased if you had been kept in the dark.’

‘I *have* been kept in the dark—that is just what I have been.

You never gave me so much as a hint of this before. If you had, I should have known what to think. Dorrien begins to play the fool with Daisy about the very time that Monica Lavenham appears on the scene. What does that mean?’

‘Well, you know, George, she was a pretty creature. But to be sure Daisy is a pretty creature too. Only I suppose——’

‘Oh! you “suppose?” Do you *know* anything? Had you heard anything?’

‘Heard? No. What should I have heard?’

His hand again roved among the china ornaments. She began to wonder at this restlessness, this impatience. Usually George was sulky and silent when out of humour. She could see that he was out of humour now, but it was not sulkiness which clouded his brow, nor did he appear disposed for taciturnity. (‘Something has gone wrong with him,’ she concluded. ‘Dear me! Poor George! Now, I wonder what it can be that has gone wrong with him?’) ‘Just tell me what you are in trouble about, my dear laddie,’ she was beginning, but she got no further.

‘Who said I was “in trouble”? I am not “in trouble.” I don’t know what you mean by my being “in trouble,” he cried angrily. ‘I ask a simple question, and can get no answer; and then you begin about my being “in trouble”!’

‘Well, I’m sure, George—but I don’t understand you. I thought you looked vexed and out of spirits, and you keep worrying and worrying round those shepherdess figures. I wish you would let them alone—they will be broken as sure as can be; and you snap me up as short as anything because I give you a kind word!’ The maternal accents ended in being aggrieved and reproachful.

‘But I don’t want a kind word, and what I do want is an answer,’ persisted he. ‘You beat about the bush, and tell me this thing and that, and the one thing I want to know is, what is the truth about Dorrien?’

‘About Dorrien?’

‘And—and Monica? They went away together last night, do you know?’

‘No?’ She started from her chair.

‘Mind you, I have only Lionel Carnforth’s word for it, and he is the biggest liar going, as everyone knows. But he swore solemnly that he had met another fellow in the morning who had seen them;—so I suppose there must be something in it. They crossed to Birkenhead—crossed in that awful fog last night—and

went on to London by the next train. Carnforth swore that it was a fact, and—and added a lot besides.'

'Well, I wouldn't have believed it of Monica!' ejaculated his mother.

'Nor would I—but ——,' said George gloomily, and paused.

'But what?'

'I came out with young Smith, who goes to the Carnforths sometimes; and he and Lionel were saying things to each other. It wasn't very pleasant to hear them.'

'Lawks! what did they say, George?' It was not in human nature not to sit up on the edge of the chair at this. Consumed with curiosity, Mrs. Schofield's very capstrings betrayed the feeling.

'They said—I wish you had been there instead of me; perhaps you would have liked it better—they said a great deal that I could have knocked down their throats again; and the worst of it was that they appeared to take it for granted that I knew as much as they did.'

'But what was it about, George?' still very curious.

'About? This fine gentleman of Daisy's and—and the girl who has supplanted her. It was Monica Lavenham who took Dorrien away from Daisy. She—he—it appears everyone knew it and talked of it—everyone but ourselves. They say that one time they met—it was the evening before cousin Joseph died—it was at the Carnforths'—Smith was there—it was about that evening that he and Lionel Carnforth were talking, when he swallowed something in his throat, and kicked a footstool aside savagely.'

'About Monica and Mr. Dorrien?'

'Yes. Monica and Mr. Dorrien. Mother, if you had known anything of this, you might have told me.'

She looked up in amazement at the words, and a terrible idea all at once occurred to her.

'Have told him? *Him*? Why have told *him*? What was it to George? It had been of Daisy she had had to think. No one had ever supposed—how should anyone have supposed that this unfortunately crossed love affair could be anything to Daisy's brother? He how never liked Dorrien, and would be more than acquiescent in the cessation of Dorrien's visits—he might have seen for himself that the end had come. Why then should he now turn on anyone and complain that he had not been told?

All of this she could have explained and demonstrated but for one thing—the tone of her son's voice. It was thick and husky, the utterance of one struggling with suppressed feeling; and

when, arrested by this, she had her attention drawn to his air, his countenance, his attitude, she began to perceive the truth. The truth was so dreadful to her that she was literally shocked into silence. She was thankful that, Daisy coming in, George went out, and the colloquy was at an end.

Mrs. Schofield beckoned her daughter to the side of her chair.

'Daisy,' she whispered—then peering round and round to make sure no one else was in the room—'Daisy, I don't know but that I'm wrong—but if I'm right I—oh! don't come to do the room yet, Charlotte,' as a housemaid entered; 'just wait five minutes, and I'll be gone upstairs. Has the gong sounded? Well, I did not hear it. We'll go directly,' waiting till the door closed again. Then once more, holding fast her daughter's arm, and screening her mouth with the other hand—

'Daisy, did George love Monica?' Monica's name was almost inaudible.

'Oh! I knew that long ago,' said Daisy, readily.

'You knew it, and never told me! The poor boy!'

'It was a ridiculous idea!' said Daisy, who was now to prove herself a woman and a sister. 'It was really too absurd of George. He never spoke to her—she never spoke to him,—or at least if she did, it was only to laugh at him and make game of him. It used to put me out to see them together, and I could not think how George could be so foolish.'

'Well! Foolish? If Monica Lavenham was good enough for Mr. Dorrien, I don't see how you can call George foolish.'

'My dear mother! It was not she who was not good enough.' Daisy laughed aloud. 'I should never blame any man where Monica was concerned. But to think of *George*!'

'Well, George—why not George? George is as good as other people, I suppose,' rejoined George's mother, with very natural asperity. 'I am sure I don't know what you mean by looking like that, and saying "*George*!" in that tone of voice. I am sure I for one am very sorry for poor George, if it is so,' subsiding into a sigh; 'and if you had seen him just now, fretting and fidgeting from one leg to another, and glooming at me as if I had been to blame for it all, you would have been sorry too.'

'Oh! well; but after all,' protested Daisy, who, clear-sighted and noble-minded about her own love-story, had, it must be confessed, but scant sympathy with what seemed to her nothing short of a parody upon it; 'after all, he ought never to have thought of such a thing. He might have known—as if Monica would ever have looked at him, have dreamed of him! *George*!' And

a vision of George with his umbrella, his newspapers, his hat on the back of his head, and his pale, dull face beneath—George stumping home at the close of his day's work, with soiled collar and cuffs, with not infrequently railway smuts on cheek and chin (smuts had a knack of adhering to George's face; he had not the cool, fine skin of Dorrien)—all of this rising before the speaker's eye as she spoke, made the unfortunate subject of her cogitations form such a contrast to the brilliant Monica, that in spite of herself she once more ejaculated the obnoxious word in the obnoxious accent before she was aware.

'For goodness' sake, don't repeat that again!' cried Mrs. Schofield, who, between son and daughter, had had about as much as she could stand, already. 'I never heard the like of it! A sister to speak like that of a brother! Fie upon you! say I, not to stand by your own, let who will be the other. I am sure I would not breathe a whisper against any one of the seven of you; but you seem to take a pleasure in be-littling us all now-a-days. "George," indeed!' fanning her heated face with a newspaper, and jerking her chin indignantly about.

Daisy had seldom seen her mother moved to a like extent.

Some daughters would have caressed away the frown; but the Schofield family were not demonstrative. It was not their way to speak softly, nor to move gently. It was only once or twice in a lifetime that the real warmth within could emerge into tenderness without. Daisy had been tender, exquisitely tender, and gentle, and dignified in the great trial of her life, but in everyday matters she was still the same Daisy that she had ever been. Accordingly she replied to the above, I am sorry to record, with a brisk 'Nonsense!' and, though secretly a little ashamed, made a pretence of being absolutely unaware of having said or done anything to be ashamed of.

'There you go! "Nonsense!"' rejoined Mrs. Schofield. 'It is no "Nonsense" to him, I can tell you. I call it downright unfeeling of you, Daisy. One would think that *you*, at any rate——'

—'Now do listen to reason, mother.' Daisy spoke a little hurriedly, having no desire to see the conversation take the turn obviously impending. 'Do just think of it for yourself. George, at his age——'

—'How old is she, pray?'

'That is nothing. Women are always older than men. And as for Monica, she is years and years older than George in everything *but* years. She thinks of him as a mere boy—if she thinks of him at all. He has never made the smallest attempt to show

himself as anything else. A mere boy, and sometimes a very rude boy. He was often particularly disagreeable when the Lavenhams were by. I used to wonder what made him so.'

'And yet you say you knew about his caring for Monica long ago?'

'I found it out, somehow. I am sure I hardly know how.'

She paused. On a sudden it flashed upon her that she had known because of certain signs perceptible only to certain eyes, because of answering echoes to these within her own breast.

'But Monica did not even like George,' continued Daisy, eagerly. 'You know he is not the sort of man she has been accustomed to. George is very good in his way; and of course *we* understand him and are fond of him,—but to strangers and visitors he never shows off well. He is tiresome, and stupid, and mopish. He never throws himself into what is going on, nor takes any interest in what other people are doing. It is always "Let me go my own way" with him. He never cares about making himself look nice, but is just as dowdy when people are with us as when we are alone, and says that it "does not matter," and that he is "well enough." I have tried over and over again to make him better. He says he does not want to be better. He won't even try to improve. He only grows cross and sullen if I begin to speak about it.'

'I daresay. No young man likes to be lectured.' Mrs. Schofield could listen no longer. 'If that is all the comfort you have got to give poor George, I must say I don't wonder that he flies out at us all. He might have expected a little sisterly feeling from *you*, Daisy.'

Daisy coloured. There was no parrying this second home-thrust.

'Was it this he was talking to you about when I came in?' she enquired, after a silence during which Mrs. Schofield's kind heart was already repentant.

'Yes, poor dear! Daisy, I am sorry I said that. For after all, Daisy, you are a good girl, and have had your own trials; but when I think that things have gone cross with both of you——,' and tears stood in her honest eyes.

Daisy said nothing.

'That was what he was telling me, and hard work he had to get it out at last,' continued her mother, in a sort of husky whisper. 'I am sure I thought we were never going to get to the point—and to be sure, we never did quite get to it; but the

way in which he said, "*You might have told me,*" shaking his head from side to side—oh, dear! oh, dear! it fairly cut me to the heart.'

'What was it that you "might have told" him

'About Monica and Mr. Dorrien, of course.'

'Do you mean that he had never "told" himself? That he had never seen anything for himself?'

'Oh! I am sure he had never seen anything.'

'Then he is a—— who *had* told him, then? How had he found out, if he had not the wit to find out for himself?'

'Lionel Carnforth and the other young men were talking. And oh! I forgot. You have not heard the last thing, Daisy. They do say that Mr. Dorrien went off to London with the two girls, yesterday. He was seen to cross to Birkenhead in their boat, and afterwards he was with them in the station. No doubt they went all the way together. Not a word of this did Miss Monica say in her letter, though. Now I did not think Monica was sly, whatever she was.'

'The letter she wrote to me was written before they started,' said Daisy.

'Aye, to be sure; but they had engaged to meet him then.'

'*That* I am sure they had not.'

'Well, Lionel Carnforth said so.'

'Lionel Carnforth!' repeated Daisy, with contempt. It was noticeable that everyone naming the name of Carnforth invariably did so with the same intonation.

'Oh! but there was another of George's friends, a young Smith—you know, old Tom Smith's son—he goes to the Carnforths', and he had been at that dinner-party—you know?'

Daisy nodded.

'And he gave such an account of it. I could see by George's face what an account of it he had given.'

'Mother'—it was another Daisy who now spoke—'mother, we need not go into that old matter. It is past and done with. Monica and Mr. Dorrien are parted now, and parted for ever. If Monica ever injured me, ever did me any wrong, ever——'—she bit her lip—'I forgive her from my heart,' she subjoined, after a moment's pause. 'She is—she has been bitterly punished; but I forgave her even when I did not expect any punishment. She did not know what she was doing. She——,'

—'She knew well enough she was behaving badly to poor George, anyway.'

‘But what I do not believe, and what I never will believe, unless I hear it from her own lips,’ proceeded Daisy, wrapped in her own train of thought, ‘is that yesterday’s was a premeditated meeting. I know she did not mean to see him—I know he did not wish to see her. Since there can be no marriage, they are better apart; and a strange, almost clandestine appointment—Monica would never have stooped to it. She could have seen him openly any day, if it had been only to say “Good-bye.” Why should she not? But she thought it best not. They must forget each other now.’

She stopped abruptly.

‘Ah! well, it has been a bad business all through,’ concluded Mrs. Schofield, rising heavily to her feet. ‘But I do say, I am sorry for poor George,’ letting fly a Parthian shot as she quitted the room.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LONDON LIFE VIEWED FROM LONDON LODGINGS.

Poverty makes people satirical—soberly, sadly, bitterly satirical.—FRISWELL.

IT was nearly twelve o’clock when our travellers arrived at their London lodgings, and too tired and dispirited to be observant, they found the general appearance of everything satisfactory, and the meal which had been prepared, appetising.

But the morning showed all in a different light.

To be sure the place was not more dirty and disorderly than such abodes usually are, but it looked insufferably small, dull, and ill-furnished to eyes lately accustomed to surroundings which, if not invariably in the best of taste, were at all events as handsome and substantial as an elongated upholsterer’s bill could make them. The apartments at Flodden Hall had moreover been arranged so as to admit abundance of light; Mr. Schofield liked to see into every nook and corner of his carvings and gildings; and while this had at first been a drawback in the eyes of his nieces, eventually they had come to find other rooms with less noble windows heavy and uninteresting.

Cullingdon had of course been excepted; but then Cullingdon, with its long, narrow, mullioned casements, had been a spot by itself; its ivied turrets and terraces had competed with no other

domain in the neighbourhood, and its lofty arched roofs had entered into no comparison with their modern ceilings.

Of course, Flodden Hall, and Bingley Hall, and all the other halls about, had been vulgar as compared with Cullingdon,—but they had also been marvellously comfortable. Even of Bingley Hall Monica now thought with tenderness, when its spacious suites rose in the retrospect. It was always now present to her remembrance as beheld upon that memorable evening when she had seen the sportsmen advancing in the distance through a vista of open doorways, and when, their goal reached, the one who had at first threatened to be a recusant had paid her his open, bold, defiant court, in a way that had made all others stand aloof.

Repent as she might, there would always be a secret tenderness in her heart for the Carnforths' ample saloons, which had afforded space for such isolation and devotion.

And Monica and Bell had learned to alter their opinion even of their own more modest mansion in the mercantile neighbourhood. People must indeed be hard to please if they cannot live contentedly in a house which has absolutely no blemishes in point of convenience or comfort; which is warm or cool, according to requirement; which is perfectly ventilated, without the suspicion of a draught; and whose dining-room faces the setting sun.

Not an apartment in Mr. Schofield's villa but was arranged so as to suit some hour of the day. Even the turns of the staircase and the windows on the landings had been thought out with care, and turned to account. Broad, shallow steps, velvet pile, and gigantic brass rods had but ill prepared our sisters for the rickety, odorous little flight of stairs by which they had to ascend and descend in Albion Street.

The wall-papers looked unutterable things at them. There were grimy patches near the doors, as though that locality had been used as a resting-place for an endless succession of weary chambermaids.

There were holes and darns in the carpets; castors were off table-legs, which were propped up by adroit contrivances; and springs were broken in the most specious and inviting-looking of the easy chairs. The little sofa was as hard as if it had been a bare board.

All of this was not, of course, discoverable at the first glance. A new-comer would say, as the few who came to see the Miss Lavenhams did say, 'What nice lodgings! What a cosy little

sitting-room!’ But the poor girls soon found out that one can look tolerably cosy without by any means feeling so.

‘A good fire goes a great way,’ Monica would aver, and in consequence she always kept up a good fire, piling on the coal, which was excellent coal, and gave forth long bright jets of flame when stirred. Furthermore, she and Bell soon effected a revolution in regard to crochet-antimacassars, and the like; they had plenty of pretty things and made use of them,—but they could not make the furniture what it was not. No amount of elegant drapery could stuff cushions, or repair springs.

‘And our bedroom is so very dark and dingy,’ Bell would murmur disconsolately. ‘It is dreadfully bare, too; we have literally nowhere to hang our dresses. There is neither hanging-cupboard nor wardrobe; and as for the chests of drawers, we have each one chest of drawers, and three of my frocks nearly fill mine! The washing-stands are still worse. I really dislike getting up in the mornings.’

‘Now what is Bell grumbling about over there?’ Monica interposed one day when Bell had reached this point, her auditor being an old friend who had come to Albion Street for lack of something better to do, when passing through London on her way to the Riviera. ‘If you listen to her, my dear Mary, she will grumble solemnly on all day long. Bell likes to drone. It is her music. She droned when we went to Flodden Hall; she drones now.’

‘I never droned in Lowndes Square.’

‘Oh, but I think you did, my dear!’

Miss Mary Howard, the visitor, laughed a little at the remembrance. ‘Bell generally had some little grievance or other when I used to come to Lowndes Square, as far as I remember, had she not, Monica? By the way, how are your uncle and aunt? Still abroad?’

‘Oh, yes, for the winter.’

‘That is why we are here,’ cried Bell, rather eagerly. ‘It is quite possible that aunt Fanny may be well enough to come home in the spring, and then, of course, we cannot tell what will be done. So Monica and I thought we had better just set up house for ourselves,’ she added, hoping devoutly that Monica would say nothing to such a statement.

Nor did Monica. She was not a saint. She had only just begun to be honest; and so, though well aware that a colouring was being thrown upon their present mode of life which the facts of the case would scarcely bear out, she told herself she was not obliged to be disagreeable and contradictory.

In her heart she was perfectly sure that to receive her sister and herself once again as members of their family circle was the last idea likely to occur to Colonel and Mrs. Lavenham. People who are selfish at the beginning of a separation, are seldom less so when separation has done its work. Their aunt had written a languid, conventional epistle, in which her own and her husband's continued invalidism was dwelt upon at full length, and which contained a somewhat pointed reference to the expense of hotel life, the ruinous charges of Continental doctors, &c., &c.

Very few sentences had disposed of her nieces' bereavement; it had been 'a sad event'; Mrs. Lavenham sincerely trusted they had not 'suffered from the shock': she supposed they would 'remain among their relations in the North, where they had met with so much kindness': and she begged they would let her and their uncle know 'when their plans were settled.'

'It was a pity we told her of the kindness,' Bell reflected, when the last words were reached.

She and Monica, stung by the contrast between the cool abandonment of their first guardian and the wholehearted devotion of their second, had sounded Mr. Schofield's praises in every letter from Flodden Hall, with a double sense of pleasure in doing so. They had—or, at least, Monica had—liked to give vent to her gratitude, as well as hoped that the ardour of her expressions would nettle the recipients, who might read between the lines, and perceive that the young relations whom they could thus cast off at a moment's notice were not so blind but that they could mark a difference, and note a distinction.

They had not been allowed to perceive whether or not the arrow thus sped had found a mark. Colonel and Mrs. Lavenham had merely expressed gratification at all they heard; and, indeed, they had probably only experienced the same, for there are people who are entirely indifferent to all such considerations as being beloved and respected, especially by those whom they have done with, and from whom they expect no more; and, accordingly, when a reply arrived from Monte Carlo, where the elderly pair were already settled for the winter at the time of Mr. Schofield's death—or, at least, at the time they heard of it, ten days later, since no one had cared to write before)—there had been an obvious underlying strain of congratulation on the fatal event's having happened, since it had happened at all, after Monica and Isabel had become known to the Schofield connection.

'They are all as rich as Jews up there,' Colonel Lavenham

told his wife in private. 'No doubt the girls will get a good share of the money, somehow. We did the right thing when we shunted them off to Liverpool; we were in the nick of time: now they have taken hold there, and can look out for themselves. It was as good as binding them apprentices to a trade, sending them to uncle Joseph—ha! ha! ha! Certainly it was a pity Joseph hopped the twig,' more seriously. 'I had meant to run up there some day, and pay him a visit; and I feel sure we should have been the best of friends. My "brother-in-law," you know. Oh, it should have been "brother-in-law," or anything else, so long as he took the girls off our hands; and the old fellow was so decent about it, so uncommonly handsome, I may really say, that I could have put my feet under his mahogany, and drunk his '43 port with the very greatest satisfaction. Now, my dear Fanny,' the Colonel had proceeded, 'whatever you do, not a word to those two about returning to London. London must be a tabooed place to them henceforth. They must stay where they are; that must be the first thing to make plain. They have got into the Schofield swim, and in the Schofield swim they must remain. I hear there is a young Schofield—he is probably the head of the firm now—why should he not do for one of them? Anyhow, there are lots of other young merchant princes gaping for wives like Monica and Isabel. It would be the very ruin of those two to take them away from such advantages; and so I must beg you to be careful what you say. Liverpool must be everything to them—London, nothing. That's the point to make. Keep them out of London by hook or by crook—by fair means, or foul. We may—ahem!—we may return to London ourselves some day.'

His nieces were already there, when the letter, carrying out the above instructions, reached them.

Monica saw through it at a glance. A sarcastic smile played upon her lips as she read. 'Oh, you need not be afraid, good people!' she cried, apostrophising the document. 'We shan't trouble you. We know now what to expect from you. Our "Schofield relations" forsooth! Our "Schofield relations" were a thousand times better and kinder to us than ever our Lavenham relations have been. We are supposed to settle down among our "Schofield relations," are we? I—no, I won't say I wish we could have done so, but it is something to feel that *they* wished it. *They* did not send us away; *they* would not have written a cold, cruel letter such as this. Oh, poor uncle Schofield! what would he have felt

if he had read these set phrases about himself? He who was the dearest, the best, the only friend to us in our extremity, to be disposed of in a formal sentence or two! That terrible, terrible death which befell him, to be called a 'sad event!' Not a word of real sympathy, nor sorrow. Well, sorrow, of course, aunt Fanny could not be supposed to feel, but she might have known that *we* were sorrowing, and have felt a little for *us*. I do not believe she has had one single twinge. She would say "Dear me!" and sip her wine and water, and ring for something or other she had forgotten to bring downstairs, before finishing my letter! I know; I have seen her. When her own brother was lying dangerously ill, hanging on from day to day, she used to stop in the middle of reading the morning's accounts to pour herself out her second cup of tea! She would do the same if uncle Lavenham were dying; so would he if she were. They have no hearts; they do not know what hearts are. And if we, Bell and I, had gone on living with them, we should have grown like them. It is true that we despised what we saw, and it often made us indignant and contemptuous; but that was because we were young, and had still about us some remnants of human nature as it is planted in childhood. We should have outgrown that: we were on the high road to it.'

She paused, then spoke more firmly, and spoke aloud though no one was by. 'Thank God, we were stopped in time. We have had an awakening; and I am glad—yes, glad,' emphatically, 'that it came; and that it came in the shape it did. This letter confirms it. If uncle and aunt Lavenham had written warmly, lovingly—written begging us to join them—or even claiming us, on their return to London—we should have accepted such an invitation as a matter of course. Poor Bell, I am afraid, was counting upon it. She is in tears upstairs now. She begins to realise what we have to expect. But I?—I rejoice: I am free: I see myself—and her—beginning a new life, untrammelled by old ties and teachings. We shall learn together what the better way is like, and perhaps some day—some day'—her voice sank, 'we shall begin to tread it.'

'You know I could not have believed they would really write like that,' said Isabel, coming downstairs with swollen eyelids. 'I took it for granted they would say *something*. It seemed as if they could not *help* saying something. I had made up my mind that we should have to be here all the winter; and that we should have to be very poor, and have no carriage, and do without

Josephine; but I thought it would not really so very much matter as long as hardly anybody else was in Town. We could always have given the excuse that we were only here while uncle Ivenham and aunt Fanny were abroad; and made out that it was rather fun living alone, and all that; and it really might have been fun if it had been done for fun, don't you see, Monica? But if this is to be *our life*——,' and again her eyes swam, and she looked round with an expression that filled her sister's orbs also.

Monica felt this would not do.

'It is rather dark just ahead,' she began, but in spite of a desire to say more, could find no utterance for another word at the moment.

'To live in lodgings—*always!*' murmured Bell.

No rejoinder.

'Monica, how much have we exactly?'

'Three hundred a year, between us.'

'And had we nothing, absolutely nothing, from uncle Schofield?'

'Absolutely nothing. You know how it was. He had meant to leave us everything; he died before he had arranged anything.'

'Well, they might have given us some of it, Monica.'

Monica smiled a little. 'Whom do you mean by "they"? ' she said. 'We could not very well have gone to the beneficiaries—how I did hate that word, when it came over and over again in the will!—and said to them, "Give back your ill-gotten gold—it only came to you by a fluke,——"'

—'Oh, Monica, how can you talk like that!'

'I talk like that, my dear sister, by deep design. Believe me, I am at heart a gloomy, embittered, soul-maddened creature'—(she was now herself again), 'but if I give way to the stormy billows within, they would presently rise into a hurricane—a tempest—a tornado,' suitably declaiming and attitudinising, 'which would sweep all (*molto crescendo*) before it! Heigho! I wish it would sweep this chimney!'

Isabel could not choose but laugh, as a gust of soot descended at the moment, and the bathos was irresistible. 'That's right; laugh again, my dear,' said Monica, in a more natural tone. 'Now we shall get on. A fig for fashion and folly! We are going to be independent young ladies, living prudently within our means. We shall see London from a new point of view. There are great sights to be seen in all directions, which we should

never have beheld to the end of our days, but for this chance. We should never have penetrated where we can now penetrate. We will "do" our London, Bell. We have "done" Paris, and Rome, and Venice, and Florence; but we should never have "done" our own London from Lowndes Square. I want to see, oh, so many places, and find out about so many things! If we cannot have one side of the cake, we will eat away at the other. And I can tell you one thing, my dear Bell, the people who *are* in Town in the winter will be a great deal more glad to see us, and will have far more time for us, than they would have in the summer. I fancy we shall find ourselves in request at the present moment. We are not going to shut ourselves up; don't you be afraid. We will make a round of calls presently, and see who's where, and what they mean to be to us? There are *some* nice people everywhere—even aunt Fanny knew a few. I think the Belmonts were nice. Oh, the Oxendens were very nice! Lady Skipworth was not half bad. I will put down the names and addresses—now, dear me, what shall I do about the addresses? Surely I know them. I used to call them out, one after another; but it is tiresome,' musing. 'I am afraid, I am really afraid I shall be at sea now. What a pity we did not think of taking aunt Fanny's visiting book away with us! But, of course, we never dreamed of needing it so soon again.'

'No, we never dreamed of needing it so soon again,' echoed Bell, brightening under the idea. 'Monica, do you remember how you laughed at me for saying we might be in Town next season? You see I was right after all. We really shall be in Town next season.'

'Well, yes, in Town,' said Monica, glancing at her sister furtively. 'It was not precisely this I meant by being "in Town." But, however, as Mrs. Schofield would say—Bell, have you noticed how she clings to that "but, however," whenever she is on the full trot of conversation? It is her plank by which she steps from one subject to another. She whips it up under her arm, and carries it off to the next point, and down it goes, and she is away over it, and in the middle of her next sentence before you know what she is up to. "But, however," Bell, my dear, here we are, and here we have got to stay. I think I made that remark once before, when we arrived at Flodden Hall. Ah! poor Flodden Hall! we little thought—"but, however," I am going to run away and dress to go out now, Bell, and you had better come with me.

If we do not catch the little sunshine there is on a November day, we shall repent when night comes.'

'It is always night here,' murmured her sister, under her breath.

She thought Monica did not catch the words, but Monica did.

CHAPTER XXX.

FINDING FRIENDS.

Friends are much better tried in bad fortune than in good.—ARISTOTLE.

ALAS! Scarcely a single personage of Mrs. Lavenham's acquaintance was in London in mid-November, and very few were expected much before the following Easter. The Lavenhams had only cultivated intercourse with people of fashion, people of their own sort; idlers who were of no use to the world, and who had therefore no reason for dwelling where the world's chief business is carried on.

Accordingly the houses which Monica and Isabel had been wont to frequent were now fast closed, and the poor girls turned from one and another with ever decreasing expectations and anticipations. They had put on their new mourning, and it suited them. Walking suited them also. Going by the Underground Railway to Sloane Square, they had emerged among familiar scenes on a clear, frosty afternoon, and their spirits had risen under the prospect of tripping briskly from house to house, and being welcomed, at any rate, at some.

At not a single door did they gain admittance. The one or two acquaintances who were in residence, were out; but by far the greater number of dwellings were deserted.

'Oh, this is dreadful!' said poor Bell, at last. She was tired out as well as bitterly disappointed. 'It seems so strange, so odd to be going about like this. Exactly as if we were being turned away from every place.'

'Nonsense!'

'Nonsense, if you like, but you need not be so sharp. I only said it seemed as if we were. We have gone all round this square, and round Belgrave Square, and Eaton Square. We have been up and down Eaton Place——'

—'Never mind where we have been.'

'But I am tired, Monica. I cannot walk much more. Oh, if we only knew one good house to go to, where we could be *sure* of being let in, and finding people at tea!'

'I know one,' Monica began; then hesitated and considered. 'I did not mean to go to them, I am afraid,' she said; 'but, Bell, there are the Rowlands.'

'The Rowlands?'

'Yes. Do you not remember that they said we should always be welcome in Queen's Gate?'

'Queen's Gate? Where is Queen's Gate?'

'No great distance. A shilling hansom. Shall we go? You know we always liked the Rowlands.'

'But what are they doing here?' said Bell. 'I liked them, of course. I liked them down at uncle Schofield's,—but I never thought of their being in London. How did you remember they came to London? I am sure I had forgotten: indeed, I do not think I ever knew they did.'

'I remember, because I was surprised when they first told me. The house is their own, and they come to it regularly—at least, some of them do. It struck me as being rather a bright idea. You know what a large family there is. Well, some of them can always manage to be here, to make a home for the one—the father, or the eldest son—who has to be in London. One or other has always to be here, Mrs. Rowland told me. Merchants and those sort of people often have two places to work at once,' proceeded she, feeling very wise. 'Uncle Schofield said so. Now, Bell, what shall we do? If we call on these Rowlands it means that we are willing to take up again the threads we dropped when we left Lancashire. We have no need to call. I daresay they would never expect it. And, of course, they are not to know we are here. But somehow—I—what do you think?'

'Oh, I think we had better go, Monica.'

'You will be nice and pleasant, if we do? No airs, Bell?'

'What would be the use of "airs" with the Rowlands?' muttered Bell.

'Of what use are they with anybody?' added Monica, to herself. One of her new experiences was that some folks are not as simple as one would think.

A hansom was hailed, and the sisters drove to Queen's Gate. It was all right this time; the door was thrown back with a swing, and a warmly lit-up hall within looked tempting to the

two wistful pairs of eyes which had, in hunting phrase, drawn so many covers blank that afternoon.

'Oh, they are in; I am so glad!' whispered Isabel, with a sigh of satisfaction. 'We had better keep this hansom, had we not? We might not find another just when we want to come away.'

Her sister thought so too. The poor things had never been used to economise, and the man was kept waiting an hour. This taught them an experience. I doubt if they ever kept a hansom at anyone's door again.

Certainly they did not at the Rowlands'. But we will return to this first call.

Preceded into a lofty saloon, nobly appointed and arranged, the first sight which met the Miss Lavenhams' eyes was a little picture of fireside comfort, which had the effect of an oasis in what it would have been hard to term a desert, but which might have passed for one for lack of a better simile. Screened in on either side was an enormous fire, whose glowing mass shone reflected in all the steel and brass around; in front, and almost upon the broad hearthrug, were several small tables, well laden with silver and china, containing materials for tea temptingly set out; and beside these tables there stood up on their entrance two people who had evidently been disturbed, but not unwillingly disturbed, by their entrance.

They recognised Ernest and Gertrude Rowland, the eldest son and daughter of the house, who, it presently appeared, were the only occupants of the town mansion at the present date.

'How very kind of you to come!' said Miss Rowland, while her brother set chairs, and all drew round the tea-tables. 'I am so glad we were at home. Ernest and I nearly always are at home at this hour, as we have our tea and talk together now, and sometimes we go out afterwards; but we went out earlier to-day, it was so fine, and Ernest was able to get away. I am so glad we went,' she added.

'We are very glad too,' murmured Monica, and 'Very glad,' softly echoed her sister. Each had a curious sensation at the moment. Bell, I think, was saying to herself, 'If you only knew *how* glad!' while her sister was experiencing a more complicated feeling. She had, as she had said, liked the Rowlands when at Flodden Hall; she had exempted them from her wholesale contempt of the surrounding neighbourhood; and Dorrien's acquiescence had confirmed her penetration. But it must be confessed that she had only beheld them superior by comparison; and that,

had fortune smiled upon herself, she would in all probability have neither advanced in friendship nor in intimacy. Therefore she had almost a sense of guilt in being thus welcomed, and in having it supposed that she and her sister had gone out of their way to seek a welcome. If the finer people had been at home and friendly, would they ever have remembered Queen's Gate? It was only in consequence of having been turned away from the last doorstep, and of its being a toss-up whether they should go home to their scanty lodgings, weary and tea-less, or should make one more trial in a less genteel quarter, that the latter quest had been undertaken.

The cordial tone and beaming eye of her youthful hostess smote Monica now with a sense of compunction.

It was compunction, however, which swiftly gave way to more pleasurable emotions. She heard with real satisfaction that the brother and sister were settled down for the winter; that they were not going off to this place or that, as was nearly everyone else whom she and Bell had met;—and she found the two in themselves all that was agreeable, and more than agreeable. There was a positive eagerness in their reception of the sisters' communications regarding themselves, an alacrity in their responses, and a quiet, yet marked goodwill in their whole demeanour, which could not have been got up at a moment's notice. Evidently she and Isabel must have been liked before, and liked for their own sakes. This touched her; what had she done, or what had Isabel done to make these people like them? In looking back upon the past, Monica could not but reflect that they had done little enough in life to make anybody like them. The most that could be said of them was that they had done no harm, and even that, she cried to herself with a start, could not be said of *her*.

But here were these two, this son and daughter of their uncle's old neighbours, who had only met his nieces a few times, on which occasions Monica could not recollect being or doing anything particular—(and when she had certainly received no remarkable impressions of any sort herself)—here they were with their outstretched hands, their unaffected smiles, their interested and sympathetic inquiries—it was too much. She found herself telling Gertrude of this thing and that, consulting her about divers little troubles, and frankly admitting the very facts of her new life which she would most carefully have guarded from another listener. There was something she could not resist in the kind face before her.

'I am sure you will be very happy and comfortable, if you are like Ernest and me,' said Gertrude, presently. 'We are so happy together that, if I must confess it, we are always a little bit sorry when all the rest come up and flood the house. It is very naughty of us, is it not? But London is so quiet and peaceful just now; one can do what one likes; go where one likes; and see the things and the people one really wishes to see. Do you not find it so?'

'I don't know,' said Monica, simply. 'I never was in London in November before.'

'You are sure to like it. In the season it is always such a rush. One never gets anything done. Now, one has time for everything.'

'Oh, time—yes,' said poor Monica, with rather a quavering smile. 'I don't suppose Bell and I will feel the want of time,' and she caught her breath just as she was about to add avowals that in a cooler moment she might have wished unsaid.

Miss Rowland, however, had heard enough. 'Delightful!' she exclaimed. 'Then I may venture to make a proposal I should not have dared to do otherwise. Will you sometimes join me when I drive about? I cannot tell you how glad I should be of a companion. I am all alone in the daytime, you know. Ernest only comes home at half-past five, and I have a great, big carriage here, in which I sit up all alone day after day. Do let me call for you to go with me sometimes. I will take you anywhere you like. I never have much to do, and it would be so much pleasanter going together, if you would.'

An assent being readily given, 'I usually end with Mudie's,' proceeded the speaker; 'we change our books every other day, sometimes oftener, and I like to change them myself. And I like looking in there and seeing what is going on; do you belong to Mudie's?'

Now Monica knew that Mudie's subscription, in common with many other good things, was beyond her present reach, and a few months ago she would have rejoined with some easy excuse, the thought of the moment, to conceal this and evade curiosity; it was a sign of the struggle towards a purer ideal which had been born within her soul that she now in reply gave utterance to a simple negative. Of course Miss Rowland divined what lay behind this negative. That she did not at once offer to lend books, that she did not proffer all kinds of services and attentions was due to delicacy of feeling alone. Wealthy and generous, her

impulse would have been to lavish at once upon the two whom she had known in such different circumstances every kind of thoughtful benefaction—but she knew better. All that she could do must be done later; done when continued intercourse and intimacy, and perhaps affection, warranted as much; and accordingly her quiet dismissal of the subject and gradual transition to another was all that could be desired.

‘We are really staying an unmerciful time,’ exclaimed Monica suddenly, and she looked round for her sister. Bell, with a bright tint on either cheek, was leaning over her muff, merry as Monica had of late but seldom seen her. On the edge of a lounge near, bending forward as occasion required, and equally merry and well occupied, was Mr. Ernest Rowland. The book of coloured caricatures wherewith he was regaling his visitor apparently entertained them both.

‘One minute, Monica, just one minute,’ cried the latter, in obedience to the sisterly summons. ‘Mr. Rowland is showing me such a funny book. It is really too funny; it is quite delicious; you ought to see it; do show it to her,’ to the showman. ‘Oh, did you say we really must go? Well, I must leave the rest,’ regretfully closing the tempting volume.

‘—To another time. I shall put a marker in, and call it Miss Lavenham’s marker,’ and the book was lifted from her lap.

As the speaker lifted it another pair of eyes were directed towards him. It flashed through Monica’s mind on the instant that she had been told young Mr. Rowland was considered the handsomest man in Liverpool. He was tall, broad-shouldered, and athletically formed. Every feature was correct, and the head was well carried on the shoulders. She could find no fault with him. Had she lived till Doomsday she would never have admired him. Why was that? She could not tell. But though her own opinion on the matter might be immaterial, there was someone else whose verdict might have more consequence. What, for instance, did Bell think? She never do for Bell to be taking fancies into her head. Mr. Rowland was making himself agreeable was all very well, but he could not be in all respects desirable *pour* *passer l* *main* *with* *take* *at* *least*, sighed poor Monica, beneath her own bosom. ‘I must neither suffer, nor make others

oud, ‘I am afraid to think of the

names that poor man outside must be calling us by this time! We must not stay a minute longer. Do you know how long we have stayed already? I don't. I could not see the clock from where I sat, and I shall not look at it now.' Protestations and laughter, and a hubbub of hearty 'good-byes,' and the two were off.

'She is to call for us at three o'clock to-morrow,' said Monica, with animation. 'We are to drive about, and do our shopping—not that we have much to do, but still there are some places I really want to go to,—and, besides, I thought it better to accept the first invitation, in case we might not get another. It will really make a difference to our whole life, Bell, if we have a nice girl like that to go about with, and a nice carriage to go about in.'

'It will really,' said Bell, in the same tone. 'I was so glad you agreed to it. For a few moments I was afraid you were going to refuse.'

'I never thought of refusing.'

'I suppose you only demurred at the first so as not to seem too eager. Of course it would not do to seem too eager; but, still, Monica, with *them* I somehow should not mind. They were so very kind—both of them. I think the brother wanted to ask us to something; did you see how he slipped behind and whispered in her ear—but she just pressed her lips together and gave him a look. Then she caught my eye. But she did not do it in the least disagreeably, only as if—I fancy she thought it was in better taste not. Do you not think it was that?'

'I am sure of it; and she was quite right. But we will go if they ask us. I like that girl. She has sense—which we have not.'

'Oh, Monica, *you* have!'

'I might have had, if it had been called into play—but sense had no chance in Lowndes Square. We all said the same things, and did the same things; and whether we either felt what we said, or liked what we did, it was all one. It was *chic* to do this and that—and to be *chic* was enough. Bell, my dear, we are not *chic* now; I begin to have some hope for us.'

'Do you—do you think Ernest Rowland handsome, Monica?'

'Very handsome, Bell.'

'Uncle Schofield said he was considered the best-looking man in Liverpool.'

'He would be a good-looking man anywhere.'

'He has not the air of Harry Dorrien,' said Bell, as though to herself. 'Harry had an air—a way of holding his head up and dropping his eyelids down—even I used to feel sometimes that I

liked to look at him, and he never took the slightest notice of me. I know you must have loved him, when for you he——'

—'Hush!' said Monica, softly. A cold moon was shining into her eyes, and she kept them turned full towards it; Bell's babble was sweeter to her ear than she would have cared for Bell to know, and there was no refuge but in silence when this was the case.

It had been agreed between the sisters that Dorrien was to be spoken of freely between them. 'I will not have him turned into a sealed subject,' Monica had said. 'I did Mr. Dorrien a great wrong, and he owes me, or ought to owe me, a bitter grudge. But he does not see it so, and we parted friends. I should like to hear you talk of him now and then, dear Bell. Your talking would be better than my thinking,' and she smiled a little, and tried thus to pass off the subject.

But, all the same, Bell was not to encroach. She might say that Dorrien had an air, and own to having liked to look at him,—but she was not to insist on prying into whether this feeling had been shared by anyone else. She was to be content with her own admiration.

'But you think Mr. Ernest Rowland is handsome, notwithstanding, my dear Miss Penetration?' continued Monica, presently.

'Oh, yes, I do. Do you not? And he has very good manners, and a pleasant voice. I liked him very much to-day. And, Monica, what a delightful house it was—so comfortable; and that cosy nook by the fire, all sheltered in from the rest of the room, and those great, easy chairs, and that good tea. I don't think I ever enjoyed afternoon tea so much in my life,' with renewed zest of appetite at the recollection.

'You certainly looked as if you never had.'

'What do you mean, Monica?'

'Oh, nothing, Bell.'

'But you do mean something. I hear it in your laughing voice; your voice always laughs when you are mischievous, and so do your eyes. Let me see your eyes. Yes, they are just as full of laughter as they can be. Monica, what is it? Oh, Monica, you don't mean—you can't mean——'

—'If I mean anything, it will come out soon enough,' said Monica, springing lightly down as the hansom stopped. 'I am not sure that I do mean anything; but if I did, I expect I should mean—Mr. Ernest Rowland.'

Bell walked into the house deeply affronted.

(To be continued.)

*Archbishop Tait of Canterbury.*¹

‘I NEVER liked Tait. I never could like him. And of course I differed from him on many subjects. But I will acknowledge, that during the years of his Primacy, there was no man in the Church of England, known to me, so fit to be Archbishop.’

I was not likely to forget the words ; nor any words seriously said by one so revered. It was a great event in the writer's little history, to have a quiet talk with such a man. But I wrote down the words that evening ; and many more which will never be printed. For indeed they were of special interest. We were sitting in a quaint old room, in a quiet recess just out of the busiest roar of great London. I watched intently the worn fine features, with their expression of singular benignity and sweetness, as the words were said : said by one who might have been Archbishop of Canterbury himself had he chosen.

Then, in less grave mood : ‘Curious, his being so quiet and self-restrained in the latter days. I was there when *Tait of Balliol*, with a tremendous flourish of his cap, defied the President of the Oxford Union and was fined a pound.’ The speaker arose from his chair, and going through the action of violently bringing the cap from far behind him, shook it as in the President's face in truculent fashion. And sitting down, he added, with a smile, ‘He was very hot-tempered then.’ It could only have been occasionally, one would say.

I do not think any testimony ever borne to Tait's fitness for his great place would have been more valued by himself than this of the saintly Dean Church of St. Paul's : of whom it was truly said by one of the foremost Prelates of the Anglican Church, belonging to quite another party from the Dean's, ‘There is nothing in the Church that he is not worthy of.’ And now that both Dean and

¹ Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury. By Randall Thomas Davidson, D.D., Dean of Windsor ; and William Benham, B.D., Hon. Canon of Canterbury. In Two Volumes. London : Macmillan & Co., 1891.

Archbishop are gone, there can be no harm in repeating what was equally honourable to both.

We do not mind much about Tait's frequent statements, beginning early, that he was to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Probably fifty other men were saying the like of themselves about the same time. And one great scholar and divine, still abiding, was far more solemnly designated to the primatial throne, by one possessed of the second sight. It was never to be. But when the writer was a boy, and Tait was no farther on his way than Rugby (where nobody pretends he was a very great Head-Master), the writer was often told by one who had heard the words, how Sir Daniel Sandford had said, 'That boy will wear the mitre.' It was well remembered, too, how James Halley, whom Sir Daniel pointed out as 'the man that beat Tait,' had said, near the end, 'I'd have liked to live to see Archy Tait a Bishop.' Other estimates were current too. For Tait, though a great scholar at Glasgow College, when he went to England was never in the same flight with either of the Wordsworths, Lincoln or St. Andrews. It was after a great debate at the Union, at the time of the Reform Bill of Lord Grey, that a brilliant Oxford Tutor wrote to his brother, Senior Classic at Cambridge, of the magnificent eloquence of certain young orators who had taken part in it. Several were named: but, outstanding among them, was one 'Gladstone, a sure Double-First,' who spoke 'better than Demosthenes': of course on the side of the most obstructive Toryism. The entire aristocracy of the University, intellectual and social, was ranged on one side. 'And who is there on the other?' the enthusiastic chronicler went on. (Names shall be withheld, save one.) 'A, Nobody: B, Nobody: C, Nobody: Tait, Nobody!' The irony of the event is sometimes terrible. And as the revered scholar who wrote the letter read it aloud to a little company after fifty-five years, he added, 'You see young men should not prophesy.'

But Tait had reached his highest place, and none could call him *Nobody* (you might like him or not), when one of the greatest men in the great Church of England said to the writer, 'I don't regard the Archbishop as a clergyman at all. He is a hard-headed Scotch lawyer.' And then, in the most pathetic tones of the voice which thousands held their breath to hear, 'If I were dying, the very last man I should wish to see is the Archbishop of Canterbury!' No one who reads the Life would say the like now; and the great and good man gone, least of all.

But see how the foremost fail to understand one another. Not many quotations can be suffered in my little space. But one shall come here. It tells of the end of his dear old Nurse, 'almost my oldest and dearest friend.' Tait had taken his First-Class, and came to Edinburgh for Christmas.

'One day, towards the end of December, she was taken ill. The ailment seemed slight at first, but by the time her beloved Archie arrived she was in high fever, and occasionally distressed in mind. He never left her side except once, when he went to obtain the aid of Mr. Craig, a clergyman of the Scottish Episcopal Church, in order that the old nurse and her grown-up charge might together receive the Holy Communion, which at that time was rarely, if ever, administered privately in the Presbyterian Church, of which Betty was so staunch an adherent.¹ When the Holy Communion had been celebrated, Mr. Craig left the two alone together. All night the young man sat by the old nurse's bed, and spoke to her words of peace and comfort as she was able to bear it. She died with her hand clasped in his as the morning broke on the first day of 1834.'

Yes, and it would have been exactly the same had dear old Betty lived to see him Primate. Some words come back to one's memory. He was an illustrious man who said lightly, 'So old Tait's away.' The answer was, 'Yes, gone to Paradise.' The rejoinder came. 'Very good, but he won't be Archbishop of Canterbury there.' And indeed he would not. But though he could not take any earthly elevation where he went, he would take with him, wheresoever, the unspoiled heart of that long-departed New-year's-eve. Which is far better.

Too much is made of the Archbishop's Presbyterian extraction and education, as though these did in some degree disqualify him for his place. No doubt, his father was an Elder of the Kirk. So were his two brothers: and they sat regularly in the General Assembly, where Sheriff Tait of Perthshire was an outstanding man. Many times, in May days just departed, the writer beheld the two Maclagans, brothers of the new Archbishop of York, sitting in that Venerable House. And in his youth he preached, each Sunday afternoon, in a Scotch parish church, to the Archbishop's father and mother. Dean Lake of Durham, in a strain which falls familiar on the ear,² expresses his opinion that Archbishop Tait, in his Episcopal life, 'made serious mistakes, both in word

¹ God be thanked, all that is changed.

² Vol. ii. p. 607.

and action.' Then comes the apology for the uncultured Scot : which will provoke a smile in some readers :

'But when we think of the manner in which, born and bred in a different Communion, he gradually learned, in a time of great difficulty, to understand and even to sympathise with all the varieties of the English Church, and of his constantly increasing determination to do justice to them all—a determination which, I believe, would have gone much further, had his life been preserved'—

And so on. Here is a bit of that high-bred provincialism, too common in the Anglican Church, which is based on absolute ignorance of things Scottish. There is no gulf at all between the best in the Church of Scotland and the best in the Church of England. Presbytery is accepted, as suiting the genius of the Scottish race : but it counts for nothing, when compared with such vital questions as those of a National profession of Christianity and a National Church. Not an anti-state-church Presbyterian, but a good Anglican churchman, is brother to most men worth counting in the Scottish Kirk. And should the day come which will put Scottish churchmen to right and left, that will appear. It is twenty-seven years since Mr. Froude, after his very first evening in Scotland, spent in the company of some who are mostly gone, said to the writer, 'I see your best men are exactly like our best men.' And it is many a day since Dr. Liddon, on his first day in St. Andrews, said how astonished he was at the sympathy he had met in the Kirk : said that though a system he liked not had gradually 'crystallised, through the fault of nobody living,' he found himself drawn, in true affection, to the men. Yet everybody knows that Liddon was uncompromising in his ecclesiastical views : even to a degree which certain of his Scottish friends found hard to bear : indeed did not bear but with frank expression of astonishment. When Bishop Wilberforce came to Scotland, and went about with his eyes blind-folded, he did indeed accept as true, and record in that very regrettable diary, various stories about the Church which were rather more outrageous than if he had stated that black was white. And on August 11, 1861, he wrote therein of 'the bitter, levelling spirit of Presbyterianism' : a spirit which may possibly once have been, but which is utterly extinct among educated men. Quite as much narrowness, bitterness, and wrong-headedness, may be found in certain strata of the Church of England, as anywhere North of the Tweed. Read many of the letters which Tait

received, not all anonymous: and this will be apparent. The future Archbishop had not far to go; and had nothing at all to get over. Of course, to the end, it remained impossible for him to believe that all vital Christianity was confined to the members of Churches with Three Orders. It was with him as when Principal Shairp went to Oxford in the beginning of the 'Movement,' and could but feel *If those men and women I have known in the Kirk were not Christians, I cannot expect to see any.* But gradually, Tait, in lesser things, not only understood the Anglican Church quite as thoroughly as Dean Lake, but even caught the atmosphere he lived in to a degree which amused a countryman. Meeting for the first time a Scottish parson who had studied Gothic churches for many years (it was under the shade of Canterbury), he said, 'Did you ever see a Cathedral before? I mean an English Cathedral.' Here appeared the natural belief of the travelled Scot that his brother Scot knows nothing. Ere the Scottish parson could reply, another dignitary, quite as famous as Tait, said, in a loud voice, 'He has seen them all. He knows a great deal more about them than you do.' Whereupon the ready Primate, with his sweetest smile, went on, 'Ah, but you must come and see Lambeth. That is quite as interesting as any Cathedral.' Scotsmen for the most part understand one another perfectly. It was an Englishman, not a Scot, who once said to the writer, speaking of a saintly woman of high worldly place (indeed very high), 'Between ourselves, I fear she is very little better than a Presbyterian.' The words were rendered in a whisper, as stating something too dreadful to be put in audible words.

We did not need this biography to assure us that only by some incredible mistake could the statement have crept into Bishop Wilberforce's Life,¹ that Tait said 'You will be the real Archbishop; I shall only be so in name.' And again, 'I do not care how soon the world knows what I know, that during your dear father's lifetime he was in reality Archbishop of Canterbury, and I was only his lieutenant.' Anything farther from the actual fact could not be imagined: fifty instances occur which so testify. Tait could not have acted under the orders of any mortal: least of all under the orders of Bishop Wilberforce. And Tait was not a gusher: though he was sometimes very outspoken. Such as knew him would testify that the sentences ascribed to him are singularly unlike his ordinary talk. As for his estimate of his

¹ P. 337. Edition in one vol.

brilliant contemporary, we find it expressed with perfect frankness. 'The Bishop of Oxford was as eloquent and indiscreet as usual.'¹

The writers of this Life have done their work very fairly, and very thoroughly. The defects of the book come of its not being merely a biography, but a minute history of the main events and controversies in the Church of England during Tait's Episcopate. We are told nothing but what we knew before: and many things are suppressed which many knew: knew not through irresponsible gossip, but surely. The frank revelations (in some details) of Bishop Wilberforce's Life, make a striking contrast with the reticence here. In the main, the Lives are like the men: though Tait could be very frank sometimes. And surely this Life would not make any modest and reasonable man ask to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Lambeth is all very well, though 'the most depressing of homes' in the judgment of one once the head of the family there: Addington in May, with those acres of rhododendrons, with the grand woods, the Scotch firs of Perthshire and the heather, can redeem the big, ugly, featureless house: and the little church is charming, with its quiet churchyard where Tait, Longley, and Sumner sleep, with only the green grass above them. Possibly it may be pleasant to take precedence of a Duke; and the income is handsome when a fleeced Primate has actually got hold of it. One such, a humorist, is said to have preached his first sermon from the text, 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves': and another, doing homage to the Queen, said she was the first official he had met who had not asked him for fifty guineas. But the responsibility is awful to a conscientious man: and unless to a man of very exceptional tastes, the work is incredibly wearisome. Every wrongheaded crank, every insolent idiot, every conscientious bearer of a testimony, from Lord Shaftesbury on one wing to Dr. Pusey on the other, with Dean Stanley away out in the open far from both, has his representation to make to the Archbishop as to what is ruining the Church of England: and his representation, often extremely lengthy, must be considered, and wisely and courteously answered. Not every answer can be as brief as that which in a line told a correspondent that the Archbishop did not see any necessity for the correspondent supplying an alleged deficiency in the Lord's Prayer. Then the dreariness, the utter lack of interest, of the fierce contentions on details of ritual and the like: all related in the Life with

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The writers of this *Life* have done their work very fairly, and very thoroughly. The defects of the book come of its not being merely a biography, but a minute history of the main events and controversies in the Church of England during Tait's Episcopate. We are told nothing but what we knew before: and many things are suppressed which many knew: knew not through irresponsible gossip, but surely. The frank revelations (in some details) of Bishop Wilberforce's *Life*, make a striking contrast with the reticence here. In the main, the *Lives* are like the men: though Tait could be very frank sometimes. And surely this *Life* would not make any modest and reasonable man ask to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Lambeth is all very well, though 'the most depressing of homes' in the judgment of one once the head of the family there: Addington in May, with those acres of rhododendrons, with the grand woods, the Scotch firs of Perthshire and the heather, can redeem the big, ugly, featureless house: and the little church is charming, with its quiet churchyard where Tait, Longley, and Sumner sleep, with only the green grass above them. Possibly it may be pleasant to take precedence of a Duke; and the income is handsome when a fleeced Primate has actually got hold of it. One such, a humorist, is said to have preached his first sermon from the text, 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves': and another, doing homage to the Queen, said she was the first official he had met who had not asked him for fifty guineas. But the responsibility is awful to a conscientious man: and unless to a man of very exceptional tastes, the work is incredibly wearisome. Every wrongheaded crank, every insolent idiot, every conscientious bearer of a testimony, from Lord Shaftesbury on one wing to Dr. Pusey on the other, with Dean Stanley away out in the open far from both, has his representation to make to the Archbishop as to what is ruining the Church of England: and his representation, often extremely lengthy, must be considered, and wisely and courteously answered. Not every answer can be as brief as that which in a line told a correspondent that the Archbishop did not see any necessity for the correspondent supplying an alleged deficiency in the Lord's Prayer. Then the dreariness, the utter lack of interest, of the fierce contentions on details of ritual and the like: all related in the *Life* with

¹ Vol. ii. . 5.

conscientious fairness and intolerable prolixity. The biographers were bound to do it, one feels: the fault is not theirs. Here is Scotland again, for quarrelsomeness and wrongheadedness and making vital of the pettiest matters. Well might Newman, still Anglican, write, 'O rail not at our brethren of the North:' our brethren of the South, though on different details, are exactly the same. And all these dreary squabbles must be patiently gone into by the Archbishop. Nothing must be contemptuously dashed aside: as Tait once said in Perthshire, *It wouldn't do*. Patience must be illimitable. And then the letters: the baskets-full to read; the baskets-full to write. Every Bishop of a large diocese has this cross to bear: but the Archbishop is a quasi-Patriarch; and from every corner of the earth where the Anglican Episcopate, or anything like it, has spread, the entreaty for counsel in all perplexity, for sympathy in all trouble, comes to Lambeth or Addington. One knows the meaning of the deteriorated handwriting: of the signature abridged to the utmost: of the gradual cessation of all punctuation. It tells a pathetic story of overwork: and that in the way which takes most out of a man, next to vehement oratory; perpetual letter-writing. A Bishop's letter is a touching thing to see: less so indeed when a Chaplain who has learnt to write exactly like him pens the letter, and the blameless Prelate does but add his name. Not many human beings realise what it is to write seventy letters in a day. The writer remembers how Dean Wellesley of Windsor once said to him, with asperity, 'You could not make Stanley a Bishop: he writes such an abominable hand.' But what would that hand have grown to, after twenty years on the Bench? It is not so many years since the writer walked, side by side with the Archbishop, up and down by the side of a little Scottish river. 'What insanity it was in A.,' he said, 'to work himself to death as he did!' Then, in a worn voice, with a sorrowful face, he expatiated on the foolishness of overworking. Ah, like other good men, wise for everybody except himself. Only anonymous letter-writers, as a rule, take upon themselves to admonish the Primate of All England. But the writer thought, within himself, 'There is not a man in Britain, to-day, overworking more than you.' Never hurried nor flurried: nothing morbid or fanciful about him: good, honest, brave, strong, cautious, far-seeing: astute without shadow of craftiness: placed very high, yet with head absolutely unturned: had but the burden been brought within man's bear-

ing, he need not have had that solemn warning before sixty, he ought to have lived to fourscore.

Then the sitting next the ministerial bench in the Lords, at any moment liable to be called on to speak in the name of the greatest National Church in Christendom. No wonder that somebody, the first time he had so to speak, was in a state of trepidation which a lay peer irreverently called 'a blue funk.' 'Why is not somebody else there?' was the question put to one who was criticising a Primate's action, having himself declined the Primacy. 'Ah,' was the quiet answer, 'that man would have disappeared. He would have been in his grave. It is too much for anyone.'

Tait was helped by his vein of Scottish humour. He listened to an amusing story with real enjoyment: and he told one admirably well. The sorrowful face, with the sad smile, added to the effect. Some remember one which Dean Stanley repeated at a Bishop's dinner at Lambeth on the authority of a Scottish friend. It elicited from the Archbishop no more than 'A very good story:' but it is literally true. On one of his latest visits to a certain country house in a Scottish county, he went alone to the post-office to send a telegram to his brother. He wrote it out. 'The Archbishop of Canterbury to Sheriff Tait,' and handed it in. The sceptical old postmaster read it aloud in contemptuous tones: '*The Archbishop of Canterbury:*' and added, 'Wha may ye be that taks this cognomen?' The Archbishop, taken aback, remained silent for a moment. The morning was cold, and he had a woollen comforter wrapped round his neck: but on second view, the postmaster thought he looked more respectable than on a first, and added, 'Maybe ye're the gentleman himsel.' Tait replied, modestly, 'For want of a better, I am.' On which the good old Scot hastened to apologise for his first suspicion of imposture: adding, 'I might have seen you were rather consequential about the legs.' Then he added words of cheer, which Tait said truly were vitally Scotch: 'I have a son in London, a lad in a shop; and he gaed to hear ye preach one day, and was verra weel satisfied.'

It was during that same visit that one was impressed by his odd suspicion of pressmen. A conspicuous London clergyman had written some sketches in a daily newspaper of immense circulation, which had attracted much notice. 'Oh,' said the Archbishop, '*he's just a reporter.*' And there an end of him. And though it cannot be recorded, it cannot be forgot, how something condemnatory of the extreme ritual of a well-known London church,

awakened a deep but musical voice of remonstrance. No one can say that that house was divided against itself. But there was a loving diversity of opinion and of liking, which was quite well understood. The good son Craufurd, early taken, thought the Church of the Future would be 'higher than my Father, lower than my Mother.' And standing by the altar in the pretty chapel of a Bishop's house, out of which a beautiful conservatory opened, the good woman said to the Bishop, 'How convenient for bringing in flowers!' The Bishop had no objection. But the Archbishop silently shook his head, though not austere.

Archibald Campbell Tait was born at Harviestoun, in Clackmannanshire, on December 22, 1811. The family had conformed to the National Kirk, but the strain was originally Episcopal. The blood was purely Scottish; and Tait, to the end, was a Scot. Even the accent could never deceive a countryman. I have heard English folk call it English. It was very Scotch indeed. He was well-connected, his grandfather being the Scottish Chief Justice. He was the ninth child, and was born club-footed. This was corrected: but not quite: he was 'never a good processional Bishop.' He was baptized in the drawing-room at Harviestoun, by Dr. MacKnight of the Old Church, Edinburgh: 'a large china vase' being used on such occasions. The Edinburgh house was in Park Place, near the Meadows. His mother, a woman of the sweetest nature, died when Archy was not two years old. The father was a most loveable man; but it was not from him that Tait inherited his caution. First, the High School of Edinburgh: then the New Academy, an admirable school, in the most unattractive surroundings. Here Tait was head-boy in his year: 'Dux.' At sixteen, to Glasgow College. Under the care of the authoritative but devoted Betty he lived in a lodging in College Street, looking on the grim but solemn façade of the old University buildings, all vanished. I have heard him speak with great feeling of those days. Sir Daniel Sandford was Professor of Greek: a very great man in his day. He died on his birthday: forty. I remember well how startled the Archbishop was when told this. It was suggested that Arnold was but forty-six. But he replied, 'Ah, in those years a man does the best work of his life.' Professor Buchanan held the Logic chair: Tait says a man 'without any shining abilities.' Not the ordinary verdict of Glasgow men. Tait worked extremely hard, getting up at 4.30 A.M. He was all his life a pattern of conscientious goodness: like another, he had been 'born before the Fall.' There is a touching little diary, of

hard work so long past. But many Glasgow students worked as hard and did not come to anything. James Halley, who died early, and who was terribly handicapped, 'beat Tait' for the Greek Blackstone: but generally they ran a very equal race. Here he attended 'the Ramshorn Kirk,' now known as St. David's. Finally, he got one of the Snell Exhibitions to Oxford: not improbably for the reason he suggests, the hospitalities of his relation at Garscube. The Snell Exhibitions are held at Balliol; and here Tait, a Tory at Glasgow, gradually turned a Whig. To the end of his life he was for Roman Catholic Emancipation and Endowment. His father, greatly beloved, died while he was at Oxford. In November 1833 he took his B.A. degree: First Class in Classics. Being entirely dependent on his own exertions, he remained at Balliol and took private pupils. But in due time he became Fellow and Tutor of Balliol: and now the struggle of his life was over. He became 'much more of a High Churchman than I was: nor has the Church of Scotland so much of my admiration as in former times.' Quite naturally, he passed into Anglicanism: being confirmed at Oxford as a young man. And on Trinity Sunday, 1836, he was ordained Deacon on his Fellowship by Bagot, Bishop of Oxford. At once, he set himself to clerical duty in the unattractive Baldon, five miles from Oxford: and, still busy with tutorial work, he served that cure diligently for five years.

In these early days, he thought of the Moral Philosophy chair at Glasgow: but more seriously of the Greek, a very considerable prize. I believe that he might have had it, in succession to Sandford. But having taken English orders, he had a difficulty about the University tests, which others did not feel at all. It was the turning-point in his life. Lushington got the Chair, to be succeeded by Jebb, both Senior Classics. Tait's life was to be in England: he determined 'to remain an Episcopalian.' Everyone knows how in March 1841 he was one of the Four Tutors who signed the famous letter concerning Tract 90. The letter was written by Tait. And he wrote, with some asperity, of those 'who regard the Kirk of Scotland as the synagogue of Baal.' He very decidedly preferred Anglicanism, both in government and worship: but, to the end, his heart warmed to the Church of his father, if not of his grandfather. In a little while, the 'great door was opened.' Arnold died on Sunday, June 12, 1842. And of eighteen candidates, after long perplexity between the two youngest, Tait and C. J. Vaughan, the decision was made on July 29, and Stanley, who thought no one really fit to take

Arnold's place, received 'the awful intelligence of your election.' Tait was inaugurated on Sunday, August 14, Stanley preaching the sermon. He wanted some months of being thirty-one.

The story henceforth is within living memories. An adequate Head-master: not a great one. He had the help of a Composition-master from the first. The present Dean of Westminster (Bradley) says, 'His sermons were sometimes really impressive. More than this I can hardly say.' Principal Shairp wrote: 'Tait was certainly by no means a born school-master. He had not himself been at an English public-school.' And he had to get on with assistant-masters, who thought Arnold's place might be occupied, but never filled. On Midsummer day 1843 Tait was married to Catherine Spooner. 'The bright presence of the beautiful young wife' was outstanding at Rugby, and afterwards. Besides other things, she was quite equal to unravelling the most complicated accounts, which had perplexed trained business-men. And this in the early Spring of 1848, when Tait seemed dying, and dictated his farewell to the Sixth Form. He got better: but it was a relief to all when, in October 1849, he accepted the Deanery of Carlisle: being, as Dean Lake writes, 'a Protestant, with a strong dash of the Presbyterian, to the end.' The Dean adds that in the Rugby of Arnold's memory and of Stanley's biography, 'a little cold water, from time to time, kindly administered, was not without its uses.' And the unexcitable, humorous Scot, was eminently the man to administer it.

In May 1850 Tait and his household settled in the Deanery at Carlisle. He did much as Dean: but it was his work on the Oxford University Commission which marked him out for elevation by a Liberal Government. In March and April 1856 the awful blow fell, whose story has been touchingly told: Five of six little daughters died of scarlet fever. Between March 10 and April 10 they were laid to rest: and father and mother were never the same again. And on September 17 Tait writes in his diary that he had this morning been offered the See of London: that now (11 A.M.) he was to take an hour of prayer, though 'I have no doubt of accepting the offer.' 'God knows I have not sought it.' It might have been as well, in stating the considerations which pointed to Tait, to have omitted some lines which yet recall a savage sentence in the *Saturday Review* of those days: Who wrote it? Some think they know. The Prime Minister was Lord Palmerston. And even the friendly biographers say 'it was indeed a bold step on his part to send Dean Tait to London.' He was

consecrated in the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, on November 23, 1856. The well-meaning Lord Shaftesbury was 'alarmed' by the Bishop appointing Stanley one of his Chaplains. 'The Bishop knows not the gulf he is opening for himself.' We all know the good man's way. The wonder is that he did not say (as usual with him) that 'thousands and tens of thousands were startled.' But in a fortnight's time he wrote, 'It is all quite right. I have no more apprehensions.' Stability of mind is a fine thing.

Troubles came, of course. The Divorce Act: Confession: St. George's-in-the-East: are ancient history. The open-air preaching: the services in Exeter Hall and in certain theatres: the evening services in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's; and in Bethnal Green: the Primary Charge, reaching to near five hours, and certainly up to date: the offer in September 1862 of York: are remembered as of yesterday. The controversy as to *Essays and Reviews* brought letters from Dr. Temple which must have been very painful to read. Nobody dreamt that Temple was to be Bishop of London himself. 'You ought not to make it impossible for a friend to calculate on what you will do. I do not care for your severity, I do care for being cheated.' Then came Bishop Colenso, and Bishop Gray. The question of what was called Ritualism grew warm in 1860. All Saints', St. Alban's, St. Peter's, London Docks, became prominent; and a 'religious' newspaper spoke of 'that ecclesiastical bully, the Presbyterian-minded Bishop of London, who has shown himself as narrow-minded a bigot and as unchristian a gentleman as ever disgraced a Bishopric.' In April 1863 the 'Bishop of London's Fund' was founded. Through all, the work of the largest diocese in the world went steadily on. And on November 13, 1868, being at Stonehouse, in Thanet, the letter came from Mr. Disraeli which offered the Primacy. The offer was accepted the same afternoon. The circumstances are quite well known.

Most readers will acknowledge the wisdom of the part taken both by the Archbishop and the Queen in the difficult matter of Irish Disestablishment. On November 18, 1869, when only fifty-eight, a stroke of paralysis fell, from which his entire recovery was something miraculous. Probably the Church owes the introduction of Suffragan Bishops to so striking an instance of fatal over-work. In the earlier days of the Archbishop's illness, Dr. Temple was appointed Bishop of Exeter, having (as Dr. Pusey averred) 'participated in the ruin of countless souls.' Early in 1872 Lord Shaftesbury besought the Lords to take action against Ritualism:

declaring (of course) that 'the fate of the Church of England is trembling in the balance.' But he found it 'hopeless, thankless, and fruitless work to reform Church abominations.' Nothing need be said of the Athanasian Creed, save that Tait was violently abused by some. As little of the Public Worship Regulation Act. At the close of May 1877 the Archbishop came to Edinburgh to the funeral of his brother John. He visited the General Assembly, then in session: which rose to receive him. The death of his son, May 25, 1878, was an awful blow: and still heavier that of his wife, who died at Edinburgh on Advent Sunday in the same year. Many know their graves, in Addington Churchyard, side by side: 'Mother and Son.'

The life of dignified drudgery went on a little longer. It was at the Royal Academy Banquet of 1880 (he wrote his speeches for such occasions) that he said, 'I am sure that the general effect of looking day after day upon a hideous building is debasing—I will not say demoralising.' The words have often been quoted to the end of improving Scottish parish kirks. Tait had no knowledge whatever of music. No man (with an ear) who sat by him in Canterbury Cathedral while the Litany was sung, will ever forget it. In a loud speaking voice, the Primate produced a discord which made the nerves tingle. Being at Paris, he 'went almost every day to the Madeleine.' Shade of Lord Shaftesbury! Then at Lambeth, on just this June day, 'Interviews and business all day long till I was nearly mad.' On July 23, 1882, the diary says, 'Still alive, but very shaky.' In August he was from Monday to Thursday at Selsdon Park with the Bishop of Winchester, 'alarmingly feeble.' Yet the humour lingered: To a worrying applicant, 'Tell him he is a consummate ass, but do it very kindly.' But he ran down fast: on Sunday, September 3, he thought he was dying. Some weeks more were given in the quiet sick-room at Addington as the days shortened. But 'it is better I should go now.' Early on a Saturday morning all were summoned. A separate farewell to each: then the benediction in a steady voice. 'And now it is all over. It isn't so very dreadful after all.'

He went at seven on Advent Sunday morning. It was on that day, four years since, that his wife had gone before him. He was seventy-two. As Chalmers said of another Primate, 'He had passed through the fire of worldly elevation, and the smell of it had not passed upon him.' It was Archy Tait of Glasgow College that died.

Ambitious Mrs. Willatts.

‘WELL, it’s what I consider a very reasonable ambition,’ said Mrs. Underwood, pouring out a second cup of tea for herself. ‘More than that, it’s the sort of ambition that every woman would have to own up to, if she was honest. Men can rise above the rest of their species in a hundred ways: they can be statesmen; they can go to the wars and cover themselves with honourable scars; they can mount up to the top of their professions; a few of them can even make big fortunes. But I should like to know what triumphs are open to us, except conquering hearts and dressing exquisitely and getting the most exclusive society to acknowledge us. With your face you can conquer as many hearts as you please, with your money you can employ the best dressmakers in the world; but to persuade these English aristocrats to come to your house isn’t so easy, and I say that a success of that kind is worth taking some trouble to win.’

Pretty little Mrs. Willatts jerked up her shoulders. ‘I don’t know; seems to me there’s more trouble than success about it, anyway,’ she remarked. ‘You and I have taken trouble enough over this ball, and it’s going to be a failure after all, because that dowdy old dolly of a duchess won’t come.’

‘How do you know that, my dear? Now, I have it on the best authority that she *will* come. Lord George has been moving heaven and earth for you, and he told me this morning that the old lady had given in.’

‘You don’t say!’ exclaimed Mrs. Willatts excitedly. ‘Well, Maggie, you’re a real friend; and Lord George is worth what I’ve—he’s worth more than I thought he was, anyway. Why, this is perfectly splendid!’

These two trans-Atlantic ladies were seated in the drawing-room of the spacious mansion in Pont Street which the younger of them had hired for the season, and which, as she fondly hoped, was destined to be the scene of some magnificent social festivities.

received, not all anonymous: and this will be apparent. The future Archbishop had not far to go; and had nothing at all to get over. Of course, to the end, it remained impossible for him to believe that all vital Christianity was confined to the members of Churches with Three Orders. It was with him as when Principal Shairp went to Oxford in the beginning of the 'Movement,' and could but feel *If those men and women I have known in the Kirk were not Christians, I cannot expect to see any.* But gradually, Tait, in lesser things, not only understood the Anglican Church quite as thoroughly as Dean Lake, but even caught the atmosphere he lived in to a degree which amused a countryman. Meeting for the first time a Scottish parson who had studied Gothic churches for many years (it was under the shade of Canterbury), he said, 'Did you ever see a Cathedral before? I mean an English Cathedral.' Here appeared the natural belief of the travelled Scot that his brother Scot knows nothing. Ere the Scottish parson could reply, another dignitary, quite as famous as Tait, said, in a loud voice, 'He has seen them all. He knows a great deal more about them than you do.' Whereupon the ready Primate, with his sweetest smile, went on, 'Ah, but you must come and see Lambeth. That is quite as interesting as any Cathedral.' Scotsmen for the most part understand one another perfectly. It was an Englishman, not a Scot, who once said to the writer, speaking of a saintly woman of high worldly place (indeed very high), 'Between ourselves, I fear she is very little better than a Presbyterian.' The words were rendered in a whisper, as stating something too dreadful to be put in audible words.

We did not need this biography to assure us that only by some incredible mistake could the statement have crept into Bishop Wilberforce's Life,¹ that Tait said 'You will be the real Archbishop; I shall only be so in name.' And again, 'I do not care how soon the world knows what I know, that during your dear father's lifetime he was in reality Archbishop of Canterbury, and I was only his lieutenant.' Anything farther from the actual fact could not be imagined: fifty instances occur which so testify. Tait could not have acted under the orders of any mortal: least of all under the orders of Bishop Wilberforce. And Tait was not a gusher: though he was sometimes very outspoken. Such as knew him would testify that the sentences ascribed to him are singularly unlike his ordinary talk. As for his estimate of his

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brilliant contemporary, we find it expressed with perfect frankness. 'The Bishop of Oxford was as eloquent and indiscreet as usual.'¹

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London did not know much about Mrs. Willatts, except that she appeared to have plenty of money; but, on the other hand, it was fairly well acquainted with that lively widow Mrs. Underwood, and was willing enough to accept her word for the fact that the new *protégée* with whom she had taken up her abode this year was 'all right.' The money, at all events, seemed to be all right, and in these latter days high society has learnt to consider wealth as a sufficient passport—especially if the possessor thereof be pretty, amusing, and a citizeness of the United States. The Duchess of Stratford, however, was exceptional. The Duchess had remained faithful to worn-out traditions; she was exclusive, and would have been exclusive even if she had not happened to marry a duke; she wanted to know who people were, and where they came from, and what they had done with their husbands, and put a good many other inconvenient questions before she would consent to shed the light of her countenance upon them; and this was why Mrs. Willatts was so desperately eager to extend her hospitality to one whom she had described truthfully, if not over politely, as a dowdy old dolly.

'Well, I presume she won't do more than walk in and walk out again,' the expectant hostess observed reflectively; 'but if she'll do that, it will answer the purpose. Once I've been recognised by the Duchess of Stratford, I don't see what there'll be to stop me. I should like to see Sam's face when he reads about it in the newspapers! The only trouble is that he won't know the difference between the Duchess of Stratford and other duchesses.'

'He don't know anything at all,' returned Mrs. Underwood contemptuously; 'he don't even know enough to keep from quarrelling with a wife who could have shown him how to get some value for his dollars, as well as her own. Let him stay home and slave at piling up wealth, since that's his notion of enjoyment. Luckily, you're independent of him.'

Mrs. Willatts sighed. 'Why, it stands to reason that I am independent of him,' said she; 'it wasn't any fault of mine that he was too stupid and obstinate to allow what is a fact in law, and I'm sure I didn't want to quarrel—I only insisted upon my rights.'

If there had not been an actual quarrel between Mr. and Mrs. Willatts, there had been a pretty good imitation of one. The young couple had married under circumstances of comparative poverty; but, shortly after their wedding, the bride's father, old Senator Kendrick, had by a happy combination of luck and astuteness acquired an immense fortune, which, on his decease, had

been divided equally between her and her brother. It was on account of the, perhaps unreasonable, claim of Mr. Willatts to have a voice in the investing and expending of his wife's riches that differences had arisen which had resulted in the departure of Mrs. Willatts for Europe and her subsequent partnership with the experienced Mrs. Underwood. Mr. Willatts had professed himself quite contented to stay in America, where he was engaged in business transactions of considerable magnitude, while his wife was fain to enjoy such happiness as may be obtained from the storming and conquest of a social citadel of which the fortifications have admittedly fallen somewhat out of repair.

'I'd like him to be here, though,' she remarked ingenuously, 'so he might see for himself that I don't need any man to show me my way.'

Her wish was fulfilled with a dramatic promptitude which may not have been entirely welcome to her; for hardly were the words out of her mouth when the butler came in and handed her a card, inscribed in bold capitals with the name of 'Samuel T. Willatts,' and respectfully intimated that the gentleman, who had declined to come upstairs, was waiting in the library.

'Mercy!' exclaimed the little lady, tossing the card over to her companion; 'what is to be done now?'

'Send him away,' answered Mrs. Underwood, without a moment's hesitation.

But Mrs. Willatts demurred to the adoption of such drastic measures. 'If Samuel means seeing me, I guess he'll see me,' said she. 'Besides, I don't want he should think I'm afraid of him. Only he shall not come to my ball unless he gives me his solemn promise that he won't wear a white waistcoat or a diamond shirt-stud.'

Mrs. Underwood intimated her opinion that the very least Mr. Willatts could do would be to assent to that modest stipulation, and after her friend had left her she awaited results with some anxiety. Mrs. Underwood was clever, but she was not rich. She appreciated aristocratic society and was appreciated in it; but, unhappily, her private means were inadequate to the entertainment of dukes and duchesses. Since, therefore, she had the present prospect of free and comfortable quarters for several months to come, she could not feel any very ardent desire for a healing over of the breach which existed in the Willatts household, and she was afraid that poor Sally Willatts was rather wanting in backbone. Her apprehensions, however, were apparently ground-

less; for at the expiration of twenty minutes Mrs. Willatts re-entered the room, flushed and excited, and, throwing herself down upon a sofa, exclaimed—

‘I do hate that man! It may be wrong, and I shouldn’t wonder if it was; but it’s true. I abso—*lutely* hate him!’

‘Poor fellow!’ said the relieved Mrs. Underwood, with a laugh; ‘what has he been doing now?’

‘Oh, I don’t know as he *did* much—it’s his way of talking to me and looking at me that makes me so mad! “Well, Sally,” he drawled out, when I offered him my hand, “having a good time over here?” I told him I was having a perfectly lovely time, and he said he was glad to hear it. He had found out all about the ball; but he was afraid he should have to ask me to excuse him that evening, as he should probably have another engagement. He wouldn’t for the world put me to any inconvenience, he said, and as it was uncertain how long he might stay in London, he concluded he had better remain at the Hôtel Métropole.’

‘Why, Sally, you didn’t surely offer to take him into your house?’

‘No, I didn’t; and I thought he might have waited for the invitation before declining it. Then he wanted to know whether I continued to intrust my brother with the entire management of my affairs, and whether I still had full confidence in Henry’s discretion. “A great deal more than I should have in yours,” I answered; at which he grinned and looked as if he could say all manner of things if he chose. Oh, he was just as mean as he could be!’

‘Well,’ observed Mrs. Underwood philosophically, ‘so long as he doesn’t interfere with you, you needn’t trouble about what he says or thinks of your brother.’

‘But, my dear, I believe he will interfere with me; he wouldn’t have been so cool and malicious unless he had had some nasty scheme or other in his head. He has prospered extraordinarily of late, he tells me, and now he has come over to Europe to see London and Paris and Rome and Constantinople, and all the other great cities. But he wouldn’t fix any date for his departure on his Continental trip, and I know just as well as if he had said so that he won’t set out before he has done his best to spoil *my* fun. Oh, Maggie, do you think he could be wicked enough to go around telling all these people that father began life as a factory-hand?’

‘I don’t see how he is to get the chance,’ replied Mrs. Under-

wood, 'and it wouldn't matter a cent if he did. These people don't want to know who your father was, or how he made his money; they wouldn't care much if you were an Englishwoman, and they care far less in the case of an American. A few of them, such as the Duchess of Stratford, might disapprove of your living apart from your husband; but it is about as certain as anything can be that Mr. Willatts won't see the Duchess of Stratford. Don't you be uneasy; with all the will in the world, he can't shake your position. There isn't time.'

She would have been less confident of that had she known a little more about the energetic and enterprising gentleman of whom she spoke. Mr. Willatts was capable, when put to it, of accomplishing a great deal in a very short space of time, and it so happened that he was saying to himself at that moment, as he strolled back towards his hotel, that between then and the date fixed for his wife's ball he ought, by taking prompt action, to be able to 'put through' a certain nefarious design which had just suggested itself to him.

To do him justice, he did not look like a man who was in the habit of entertaining nefarious designs. His blue eyes, though keen and a trifle hard, conveyed an impression of honesty, while the set of his lips, which was scarcely concealed by his short, red-brown beard and moustache, seemed to indicate a philosophical and easy-going disposition. His present situation, however, was of a nature to disturb the serenity of the calmest philosopher, and he had quite made up his mind to effect a radical change in it. Now, when Mr. Willatts made up his mind to do a thing, that thing was very apt to be done.

His first step, after consulting a 'Directory,' was to have himself driven to a certain club, much frequented by the *jeunesse dorée* of the day, and to inquire for Lord George Curtis, who, he was informed presently, was in the card-room, but would be with him in a few minutes. Indeed, he was not made to wait long before Lord George, a tall, well-dressed, well-preserved man of between thirty and forty, came down the staircase, holding his visitor's card and smiling affably.

Mr. Willatts advanced and said: 'How do you do, Lord George Curtis? If convenient, I should be glad to have a word or two with you upon a matter of business.'

'Certainly,' answered the other, leading the way into a small unoccupied room on the ground-floor. 'Won't you sit down? Perhaps you are related to my friend, Mrs. Willatts of Pont Street?'

'More or less so, sir. I have the honour to be the lady's husband, although, as you are probably aware, we are running separate establishments for the present. I understand you have been of great service to Mrs. Willatts, taking her around and presenting her to your aristocracy—in short, generally dry-nursing her.'

'Only too delighted, I am sure, to have been of any little use.'

'And,' continued Mr. Willatts imperturbably, 'it has come to my knowledge that your services have received fairly liberal remuneration from her in the form of cheques.'

The smile faded from Lord George's face and was replaced by an angry frown. 'I am surprised,' said he, 'that a third person should have been told of what I was assured would remain a purely confidential transaction between Mrs. Willatts and myself; but, since that promise seems to have been broken, I had better, perhaps, mention to you that the sums to which you allude represented a loan, not a remuneration. A short while ago I happened, unluckily for myself, to be in financial difficulties, and Mrs. Willatts very kindly offered me temporary assistance. Of course I couldn't possibly have accepted——'

'Excuse me,' interrupted Mr. Willatts; 'this is irrelevant. In the course of business Mrs. Willatts' drafts had to pass through my hands; otherwise I should not have known that she had drawn any in your favour. I have no remarks to make upon the question of loan or payment, nor yet upon your personal behaviour: it don't concern me, anyway. But I presume I may say without offence that, from what I have heard, your financial difficulties are not yet entirely at an end, and——'

'You may say nothing of the sort, sir,' interrupted Lord George in his turn; 'I decline to enter upon any discussion of my private affairs with a stranger. I owe no account of my actions to you; nor, to the best of my belief, does Mrs. Willatts, whom I have always understood to be a lady of independent means. If your object in requesting this interview was to cross-examine me, I am afraid you will gain nothing by protracting it.'

Mr. Willatts remained seated. 'My object,' said he calmly and deliberately, 'was not to be offensive—quite the reverse. I am not here to sit in judgment upon you British aristocrats or upon your methods of dealing with us who come over from the other side to make acquaintance with the cradle of our race. I am a simple business man, Lord George, and I have a simple business proposal to make to you, if you will be so good as to hear me out. Mrs. Willatts, I believe, intends to give a ball on the 26th of this month.'

Lord George stared and nodded.

‘Well, I myself have it in contemplation to give a ball on the same date—that is, if I can hire a house or rooms large enough to give it in. That ball, if it takes place, is going to be a big thing; it’s going to cost more money than any ball that has been given in this city for the last ten years, and it’s going, I hope, to be graced by the presence of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales and all the most prominent members of your London society. But before I can start the thing along I must have some guarantee that these people will accept my invite; and, from what I have heard and read about you, I believe you are the man to assist me. For your assistance I am willing to pay you a much larger sum than you have had from Mrs. Willatts—double that sum, in fact—and I may add that, if you are successful, I shall consider the money well spent and well earned. Excuse my bluntness: as you know, I am only an American and quite unaccustomed to civilised ways of doing things. Now, sir, what do you say?’

Lord George hardly knew what to say. He was a gambler, he was deeply in debt, and he had before this had recourse to divers expedients for raising the wind which had been at least as discreditable as that now suggested to him. Moreover, he was so well known and so popular that he had little doubt of his ability to earn Mr. Willatts’ cheque. At the same time, he felt some natural compunction about betraying the lady whose cause he had hitherto devoted all his energies to espousing.

‘It is very short notice,’ he said at length. ‘There is an empty house in Grosvenor Place which you might take for the night, and, assuming money to be no object, I dare say I could manage to secure everybody for you, except the Royalties, who are out of the question. But couldn’t you fix a rather later date?’

Mr. Willatts made a gesture of dissent. ‘Money is no object,’ he replied, ‘and, as my wife hasn’t contrived to get the Royalties, I can do without them, though I should be glad if you could engage some sort of a Serenity for me. But I need not point out to you that there would be no sense in my giving a ball unless I gave it on the same night as hers.’

After some further discussion Lord George agreed to accept the part assigned to him. He knew, if his interlocutor did not, that in London the clashing of two entertainments does not necessarily imply the *fiasco* of one of them. Besides, he had

really done all that he possibly could do for Mrs. Willatts, and there was something in the notion of impartially befriending her adversary which tickled his sense of humour. The whole thing, too, was such a joke, that his task was likely to be an easy one. People who accepted the wife's hospitality would assuredly wish to compare it with that of her husband; and although the latter would probably have to forego the patronage of the Duchess of Stratford, he would scarcely grieve over an abstention the significance of which he would be protected from realising by his ignorance.

Mr. Willatts, it may be, did not realise the social importance of the Duchess of Stratford, except in so far as that he conceived all duchesses to be socially important; still she was one of the ladies whom he hoped to see at his ball, and indeed she was the only one in all London whom he believed himself capable of inducing to attend it without extraneous aid. For the Duke, who had recently visited the United States and had purchased large tracts of land in the Far West, was extremely desirous of acquiring a certain property which was now in the possession of his would-be entertainer; so that the latter, in the event of his consenting to part with that Naboth's vineyard at a price slightly below its market value, would be fairly entitled to request some small recognition of his generosity. Two days later, therefore, Mr. Willatts, in fulfilment of an appointment which he had previously arranged by letter, betook himself to Stratford House, where, on giving his name, he was at once admitted. In the meantime, he had not allowed the grass to grow under his feet. He had worked hard and had made Lord George work hard also; the house in Grosvenor Place had been secured; orders on a magnificent scale had been issued to sundry tradesmen, while not a few ladies of exalted rank had graciously intimated their intention of looking in on the evening of the 26th to see what the American millionaire could do in the way of eclipsing indigenous plutocrats. Thus Mr. Willatts was fully prepared to transact business with the amiable-looking, grey-bearded personage into whose presence he was shown.

'How do you do, Duke of Stratford?' said he; 'I am obliged to you for according me the favour of a personal interview.'

The Duke said, 'Not at all, I'm sure. Very glad to see you, Mr. Willatts.'

In the course of some subsequent remarks he allowed it to be inferred that he usually left the transaction of business matters to

his agent, but that he had been happy to depart from his general rule in this particular instance.

'Well,' observed Mr. Willatts, taking a chair, 'I guess there is a saving of time in most instances when principals meet.'

He, at all events, could not be accused of wasting time. In less than five minutes he had explained with a clearness which admitted of no suspicion as to his sincerity that he was ready to deal with his noble friend in a truly liberal spirit; and the Duke, while gladly closing with the proposal held out to him, could not help wondering where this apparently keen-witted American's profit was to come in. But this also was presently explained, without delay or ambiguity.

'Now, I think you'll allow, Duke,' said Mr. Willatts, 'that this bargain is a pretty advantageous one for you, and if I was to ask a small favour of you at the present moment, I conclude you wouldn't wish to hurt my feelings by a refusal.'

'If it is in my power to do anything for you during your stay in London, Mr. Willatts,' replied the Duke, in the tone of whose voice a shade of apprehension might have been detected, 'pray command me.'

'Well, I should think you might come to my ball on the 26th, and bring the Duchess along,' Mr. Willatts returned. 'I don't believe but what you'd enjoy yourself, for it's going to be done in first-class style, and Lord George Curtis has undertaken that most of your highest-toned people shall be present at it. It's a sort of caprice of mine, you understand, to say that I have entertained the pick of British society.'

'Yes, yes; I see,' answered the Duke. 'Very natural on your part, no doubt. So George Curtis is managing it for you, is he? George Curtis is——however, I am sure he is fully competent. I will make a point of availing myself of your kind hospitality, Mr. Willatts. As for the Duchess, I hardly know what her engagements are; but——'

'I should be glad if you could go a step further and make a point of it that the Duchess should kindly lend me her support,' said Mr. Willatts; and there was a look in his face which seemed to indicate that the transfer which had just been agreed upon had not yet been formally ratified. The Duke perceived this, and reflected that he was, after all, master in his own house. Besides, what did it signify? It wasn't as if Mr. Willatts contemplated taking up his abode in England. He, therefore, boldly committed himself to a promise that the Duchess should accompany him on

the evening of the 26th, and his visitor, after gravely thanking him, withdrew.

During the interval which elapsed between that day and the 26th of the month Mrs. Willatts saw no more of her husband ; but of course she heard what everybody very soon began to talk about, and deep was her despair on learning the nature of the design by means of which he proposed to put her to confusion.

‘Didn’t I tell you that that man had come over here on purpose to take his revenge upon me?’ she exclaimed to her confidant. ‘I don’t believe there’s a meaner creature in the world than Samuel Willatts ! He’s so wealthy that he can easily afford to outshine me, and he would rather spend his last cent than fail to wreck my ball. I’m as certain of that as I am that London isn’t big enough to hold him and me.’

Mrs. Underwood reassured her. Mrs. Underwood was persuaded that London, and even London society, afforded space enough to accommodate two rivals ; and in this view she was warmly backed up by Lord George Curtis, whose treachery had not transpired. That enterprising individual was in high spirits ; for he saw his way, not only to pocketing a comfortable sum of money, but also to deserving it, which is always a satisfactory state of things to the conscientious labourer. All the ladies to whom he had spoken had been struck and diverted by the piquancy of the idea that husband and wife were bidding against one another for their favour. Not one of them had hesitated to accept the invitation of the former, and Lord George, feeling that he had done his duty impartially to both sides, was able to look forward to the issue with all the calmness and legitimate curiosity of a judicious umpire. As far as he could predict, probabilities pointed to a drawn game as the result of all this lavish expenditure.

But no human being can predict with confidence the result of any game in which the forces on either side appear to be pretty equally balanced. A trifle usually turns the scale, and very likely it was a comparative trifle, or two comparative trifles, which turned it in favour of Mr. Willatts on this occasion. Firstly, almost all of those who intended to put in an appearance at both houses had chanced to decide that they would go on from Grosvenor Place to Pont Street, and they found Grosvenor Place too attractive to be left in a hurry. Secondly, the Duchess of Stratford was pleased to remain for an hour and a half in the temporary abode of Mr. Willatts ; after which she drove straight home, notwithstanding the half-promise which she had caused to be conveyed to that

gentleman's wife. The Duchess, on hearing what her husband wished her to do, had kicked a little, but had finally yielded to his entreaties and to his assurances that the man was a very respectable sort of man in his way, besides being quite phenomenally honest. The Duchess, however, was a strait-laced old lady. It appeared to her that Mr. and Mrs. Willatts could not both of them be respectable, inasmuch as they lived apart, and that, if she must needs show civility to the one, she could not choose but turn the cold-shoulder upon the other. Moreover, she did not lose sight of the fact that the husband was a bird of passage, whereas the wife, as she had been informed, had some idea of taking up a permanent residence in London.

For the rest, the Duchess, like everybody else, was pleased and amazed by the splendour of Mr. Willatts' hospitality. The hall and staircase of the house in Grosvenor Place were simply a magnificent orchid-show, such as one might have expected to be charged half a crown for the privilege of admiring; the floral decorations of the ball-room must have cost a small fortune; the music was the very best that money could procure; and, in view of all this ungrudging outlay, how could an appreciative guest help remaining to see whether the supper would prove to be in keeping with its surroundings? The Duchess of Stratford stayed to supper; and, although neither eating nor drinking had much fascination for her personally, she was fain to confess that never in her experience had anything been better done.

Had it suited her convenience to wait for the cotillon which took place afterwards, she must have admitted that in this also the open-handed American scored an undeniable success. Perhaps it may not be the best of taste to offer presents of costly jewellery to ladies with whom one is barely acquainted; but then we live in an age which is not precisely distinguished for good taste, and if the ladies like the bracelets and one has the means of providing them with what they like, why should one not retain the pleasure of their company by that means as well as by another? Mr. Willatts retained his guests so long that a very considerable number of them never found their way to Pont Street at all. It was broad daylight when, being left alone in the scene of deserted revelry, he lighted a cigar and remarked placidly—

‘Well, if this don't make Sally gnash her teeth and tear her hair, nothing will.’

Poor Mrs. Willatts did not display her chagrin in so violent a manner; but between two and three o'clock in the morning she

did sit down and cry. Her ball—the ball upon which she had expended so much money and trouble and diplomacy—had been a dead failure. At no moment had her rooms been full; throughout the evening there had been a dearth of men; the ladies who had come had remained but a short time, and had, she thought, looked askance at her; worst of all, the most influential, including the Duchess of Stratford, had pointedly absented themselves.

‘Maggie,’ said she to Mrs. Underwood in a tragic voice, ‘I have been fairly and squarely beaten. I shall give up London and go to Paris. Sam don’t know a word of French; and besides, I shouldn’t suppose there could be another nation on earth so brutal and insolent as this. I tell you, Maggie, I wouldn’t have anything more to say to these English people if they went down on their knees to me!’

Mrs. Underwood advised half a bottle of champagne and bed. She was too judicious to offer any other counsel under the distressing circumstances, although she was not without hope that this first reverse might be retrieved by subsequent victories.

But Mrs. Willatts was convinced—and probably she was right—that, so far as London society was concerned, she had shot her bolt and missed her mark. Such sleep as she was able to obtain did not serve to raise her spirits, and when she went downstairs to breakfast at half-past ten in the morning, she was neither surprised nor angered at being informed that her husband was waiting to see her in the library. She had felt sure that he would come to glory over her in her discomfiture.

‘I hope you’re satisfied, anyway,’ was the greeting with which she accosted him. ‘You have made me ridiculous and you have driven me out of England. Perhaps you’ll leave me in peace now.’

‘Well, I guess I’ve shown you that the British aristocracy don’t amount to much,’ said Mr. Willatts tranquilly. ‘As for peace, I’m not sure whether you’ll consent to that, though it’s what I wish for. Seen the newspapers this morning? If you have, you may have noticed among the cablegrams from the United States an announcement of the bankruptcy of Henry R. Kendrick of New York.’

Mrs. Willatts’ heart stood still and the floor seemed to rise and fall before her. ‘You don’t tell me!’ she exclaimed involuntarily. ‘Then I am ruined!’

‘Why, no,’ answered her husband; ‘you are not ruined, although some folks might say that you deserved to be for having given a

free hand to Henry R. Kendrick. I bought that gentleman up a while ago, horse, foot and dragoons, and the consequence is that you are my creditor to-day, instead of being his—which is fortunate for you. I shouldn't want to be one of Henry R. Kendrick's creditors.'

There was an interval of silence; after which Mrs. Willatts said, in a very humble voice, 'Samuel, I believe I've acted like a fool. I ought to have listened to you when you told me that Henry wasn't to be trusted.'

'Well,' replied Mr. Willatts, with judicial composure, 'it can't be denied that trouble and expense would have been spared if you had.'

'And, of course, you aren't speaking seriously when you talk about my being your creditor. You must know as well as I do that I couldn't legally claim a cent from you.'

'Oh, I guess you could. I should have to see the lawyers before I could say positively; but, however that may be, you have a moral claim, which I don't dispute. Your money is safe enough, and I'll hand the whole amount over to your bankers to-morrow, if you say so; only it seems to me that you might do worse than consult me before you invest it a second time.'

'I presume you have had losses over this affair, Samuel,' said Mrs. Willatts, after another period of silence.

'Nothing to hurt me, Sally; nothing but what I should esteem as clear gains, if they enabled you and me to make a fresh start.'

'How a fresh start? We fell out because you wanted to boss the whole show, and for all your generosity I'm not going to admit that I hadn't a right to do as I pleased with my own.'

'Well,' answered Mr. Willatts, 'I've concluded to waive my pretensions. I should like to have the privilege of advising you; but I don't insist upon it. All I wanted to prove to you was, that a woman who elects to play her own game wants to be a strong-minded sort of woman like your friend Mrs. Underwood; and I'm free to confess that, if you were another Mrs. Underwood, I shouldn't be here for the purpose of begging you to let bygones be bygones and sail for New York with me next week.'

Mrs. Underwood, as may well be believed, was both distressed and disappointed when her friend informed her somewhat shamefacedly, half an hour later, that the above proposition had been acceded to. She could not resist saying: 'I knew from the first how it would be, Sally. All along you have been just crazy to get your husband back; and now it is he who has forced you to go

back to him. I only hope you won't be sorry before you are much older, that's all.'

Mrs. Underwood, however, was not left entirely without consolation; for Mr. Willatts, who never did things by halves, not only granted her the free use of the house in Pont Street for the remainder of the London season, but handed her over a substantial cheque in defrayal of necessary expenses; and she has made such good use of her time and opportunities that she is upon the point of contracting a matrimonial alliance with an Irish viscount. As for Mr. and Mrs. Willatts, they and their bickerings and their entertainments were, of course, completely forgotten many months ago.

W. E. NORRIS.

The Strange Instincts of Cattle.

MY purpose in this paper is to discuss a group of curious and useless emotional instincts of social animals, which have not yet been properly explained. Excepting two of the number, placed first and last in the list, they are not related in their origin; consequently they are here grouped together arbitrarily, only for the reason that we are very familiar with them on account of their survival in our domestic animals, and because they are, as I have said, useless; also because they resemble each other, among the passions and actions of the lower animals, in their effect on our minds. This is in all cases unpleasant, and sometimes exceedingly painful, as when species that rank next to ourselves in their developed intelligence and organised societies, such as elephants, monkeys, dogs, and cattle, are seen under the domination of impulses, in some cases resembling insanity, and in others simulating the darkest passions of man.

These instincts are:—

(1) The excitement caused by the smell of blood, noticeable in horses and cattle among our domestic animals, and varying greatly in degree, from an emotion so slight as to be scarcely perceptible to the greatest extremes of rage or terror.

(2) The angry excitement roused in some animals when a scarlet or bright red cloth is shown to them. So well known is this apparently insane instinct in our cattle that it has given rise to a proverb and metaphor familiar in a variety of forms to everyone.

(3) The persecution of a sick or weakly animal by its companions.

(4) The sudden deadly fury that seizes on the herd or family at the sight of a companion in extreme distress. Herbivorous mammals at such times will trample and gore the distressed one to death. In the case of wolves, and other savage-tempered

carnivorous species, the distressed fellow is frequently torn to pieces and devoured on the spot.

To take the first two together. When we consider that blood is red; that the smell of it is, or may be, or has been, associated with that vivid hue in the animal's mind; that blood, seen and smelt, is or has been associated with the sight of wounds and with cries of pain and rage or terror from the wounded or captive animal, there appears to be some reason for connecting these two instinctive passions as having the same origin—namely, terror and rage caused by the sight of a member of the herd struck down and bleeding, or struggling for life in the grasp of an enemy. I do not mean to say that such an image is actually present in the animal's mind, but that the inherited or instinctive passion is one in kind and in its working with the passion of the animal when experience and reason was its guide.

But the more I consider the point the more am I inclined to regard those two instincts as separate in their origin, although I retain the belief that cattle and horses and several wild animals are violently excited by the smell of blood for the reason just given—namely, their inherited memory associates the smell of blood with the presence among them of some powerful enemy that threatens their life. To this point I shall return when dealing with the last and most painful of the instincts I am considering.

The following incident will show how violently this blood passion sometimes affects cattle, when they are permitted to exist in a half-wild condition, as on the Pampas. I was out with my gun one day, a few miles from home, when I came across a patch on the ground where the grass was pressed or trodden down and stained with blood. I concluded that some thievish gauchos had slaughtered a fat cow there on the previous night, and, to avoid detection, had somehow managed to carry the whole of it away on their horses. As I walked on, a herd of cattle, numbering about three hundred, appeared moving slowly on towards a small stream a mile away; they were travelling in a thin long line, and would pass the blood-stained spot at a distance of seven to eight hundred yards, but the wind from it would blow across their track. When the tainted wind struck the leaders of the herd they instantly stood still, raising their heads, then broke out into loud excited bellowings; and finally turning they started off at a fast trot, following up the scent in a straight line, until they arrived at the place where one of their kind had met its death. The contagion

spread, and before long all the cattle were congregated on the fatal spot, and began moving round in a dense mass, bellowing continually.

It may be remarked here that the animal has a peculiar language on occasions like this: it emits a succession of short bellowing cries, like excited exclamations, followed by a very loud cry, alternately sinking into a hoarse murmur, and rising to a kind of scream that grates harshly on the sense. Of the ordinary 'cow-music' I am a great admirer, and take as much pleasure in it as in the cries and melody of birds and the sound of the wind in trees; but this performance of cattle excited by the smell of blood is most distressing to hear.

The animals that had forced their way into the centre of the mass to the spot where the blood was, pawed the earth, and dug it up with their horns, and trampled each other down in their frantic excitement. It was terrible to see and hear them. The action of those on the border of the living mass in perpetually moving round in a circle with dolorous bellowings, was like that of the women in an Indian village when a warrior dies, and all night they shriek and howl with simulated grief, going round and round the dead man's hut in an endless procession.

The 'bull and red rag' instinct, as it may be called, comes next in order.

It is a familiar fact that brightness in itself powerfully attracts most if not all animals. The higher mammals are affected in the same way as birds and insects, although not in the same degree. This fact partly explains the rage of the bull. A scarlet flag fluttering in the wind or lying on the grass attracts his attention powerfully, as it does that of other animals; but though curious about the nature of the bright object it does not anger him. His anger is excited—and this is the whole secret of the matter—when the colour is flaunted by a man; when it forces him to fix his attention on a man, *i.e.* an animal of another species that rules or drives him, and that he fears, but with only a slight fear, which may at any moment be overcome by his naturally bold aggressive disposition. Not only does the vivid colour compel him to fix his attention on the being that habitually interferes with his liberty, and is consequently regarded with unfriendly eyes, but it also produces the illusion on his mind that the man is near him, that he is approaching him in an aggressive manner: it is an insult, a challenge, which, being of so explosive a temper, he is not slow to accept.

On the Pampas I was once standing with some gauchos at the gate of a corral into which a herd of half-wild cattle had just been driven. One of the men, to show his agility, got off his horse and boldly placed himself in the centre of the open gate. His action attracted the attention of one of the nearest cows, and lowering her horns she began watching him in a threatening manner. He then suddenly displayed the scarlet lining of his poncho, and instantly she charged him furiously : with a quick movement to one side he escaped her horns, and then, when we had driven her back, resumed his former position and challenged her again in the same way. The experiment was repeated not less than half a dozen times, and always with the same result. The cattle were all in a savage temper, and would have instantly charged him on his placing himself before them on foot without the display of scarlet cloth, but their fear of the mounted men, standing with lassoes in their hand on either side of him, kept them in check. But whenever the attention of any one individual among them was forcibly drawn to him by the display of vivid colour, and fixed on him alone, the presence of the horsemen was forgotten and fear was swallowed by rage.

It is a fact, I think, that most animals that exhibit angry excitement when a scarlet rag is flourished aggressively at them, are easily excited to anger at all times. Domestic geese and turkeys may be mentioned among birds : they do not fly at a grown person, but they will often fly at a child that challenges them in this way ; and it is a fact that they do not at any time fear a child very much and will sometimes attack one without being challenged. I think that the probability of the view I have taken is increased by another fact—namely, that the sudden display of scarlet colour sometimes affects timid animals with an extreme fear, just as, on the other hand, it excites those that are bold and aggressive to anger. Domestic sheep, for instance, that vary greatly in disposition in different races or breeds, and even in different individuals, may be affected in the two opposite ways, some exhibiting extreme terror and others only anger at a sudden display of scarlet colour by the shepherd or herder.

The persecution of a sick animal by its companions comes next under consideration.

It will have been remarked, with surprise by some readers, no doubt, that I have set down as two different instincts this persecution of a sick or weakly individual by its fellows, and the sudden deadly rage that sometimes impels the herd to turn upon and

destroy a wounded or distressed companion. It is usual for writers on the instincts of animals to speak of them as one : and I presume that they regard this sudden deadly rage of several individuals against a companion as merely an extreme form of the common persecuting instinct or impulse. They are not really one, but are as distinct in origin and character as it is possible for any two instincts to be. The violent and fatal impulse starts simultaneously into life and action, and is contagious, affecting all the members of the herd like a sudden madness. The other is neither violent nor contagious : the persecution is intermittent ; it is often confined to one or to a very few members of the herd, and seldom joined in by the chief member, the leader or head to whom all the others give way.

Concerning this head of the herd, or flock, or pack, it is necessary to say something more. Some gregarious animals, particularly birds, live together in the most perfect peace and amity ; and here no leader is required, because in their long association together as a species in flocks they have attained to a oneness of mind, so to speak, which causes them to move or rest, and to act at all times harmoniously together, as if controlled and guided by an extraneous force. I may mention that the kindly instinct in animals, which is almost universal between male and female in the vertebrates, is most apparent in these harmoniously acting birds. Thus, in La Plata, I have remarked, in more than one species, that a lame or sick individual, unable to keep pace with the flock and find its food, has not only been waited for, but in some cases some of the flock have constantly attended it, keeping close to it both when flying and on the ground ; and, I have no doubt, feeding it just as they would have fed their young.

Naturally among such no one member is of more consideration than another. But among mammals such equality and harmony is rare. The instinct of one and all is to lord it over the others, with the result that one more powerful or domineering gets the mastery, to keep it thereafter as long as he can. The lower animals are, in this respect, very much like us ; and in all kinds that are at all fierce-tempered the mastery of one over all, and of a few under him over the others, is most salutary ; indeed, it is inconceivable that they should be able to exist together under any other system.

On cattle-breeding establishments on the Pampas, where it is usual to keep a large number of fierce-tempered dogs, I have observed these animals a great deal, and presume that they are

very much like feral dogs and wolves in their habits. Their quarrels are incessant ; but when a fight begins the head of the pack as a rule rushes to the spot, whereupon the fighters separate and march off in different directions, or else cast themselves down and deprecate their tyrant's wrath with abject gestures and whines. If the combatants are both strong and have worked themselves into a mad rage before their head puts in an appearance, it may go hard with him : they know him no longer, and all he can do is to join in the fray ; then, if the fighters turn on him he may be so injured that his power is gone, and the next best dog in the pack takes his place. The hottest contests are always between dogs that are well matched ; neither will give place to the other and so they fight it out ; but from the foremost in strength and power down to the weakest there is a gradation of authority ; each one knows just how far he can go, which companion he can bully when he is in a bad temper or wishes to assert himself, and to which he must humbly yield in his turn. In such a state the weakest one must always yield to all the others, and cast himself down, seeming to call himself a slave and worshipper of any other member of the pack that chooses to snarl at him, or command him to give up his bone with a good grace.

This masterful or domineering temper, so common among social mammals, is the cause of the persecution of the sick and weakly. When an animal begins to ail he can no longer hold his own : he ceases to resent the occasional ill-natured attacks made on him ; his non-combative condition is quickly discovered, and he at once drops down to a place below the lowest ; it is common knowledge in the herd that he may be buffeted with impunity by all, even by those that have hitherto suffered buffets but have given none. But judging from my own observation, this persecution is not, as a rule, severe, and is seldom fatal.

It is often the case that a sick or injured animal withdraws and hides himself from the herd ; the instinct of the 'stricken deer' this might be called. But I do not think that we need assume that the ailing individual goes away to escape the danger of being ill-used by his companions. He is sick and drooping and consequently unfit to be with the healthy and vigorous ; that is the simplest and probably the true explanation of his action ; although in some cases he might be driven from them by persistent rough usage. However peaceably gregarious mammals may live together, and however fond of each

other's company they may be, they do not, as a rule, treat each other gently. Furthermore, their games are exceedingly rough, and require that they shall be in a vigorous state of health to escape injury. Horned animals have no buttons to the sharp weapons they prod and strike each other with in a sportive spirit. I have often witnessed the games of wild and half-wild horses with astonishment; for it seemed that broken bones must result from the sounding kicks they freely bestowed on one another. This roughness itself would be a sufficient cause for the action of the individual, sick and out of tune and untouched by the glad contagion of the others, in escaping from them; and to leave them would be to its advantage (and to that of the race), since, if not fatally injured or sick unto death, its chances of recovery to perfect health would be thereby greatly increased.

It remains now to speak of that seemingly most cruel of instincts which stands last on my list. It is very common among gregarious animals that are at all combative in disposition, and still survives in our domestic cattle, although very rarely witnessed in England. My first experience of it was just before I had reached the age of five years. I was not at that early period trying to find out any of Nature's secrets, but the scene I witnessed printed itself very vividly on my mind, so that I can recall it as well as if my years had been five-and-twenty; perhaps better. It was on a summer's evening, and I was out by myself at some distance from the house, playing about the roots of some old trees; on the other side of the trees the cattle, just returned from pasture, were gathered on the bare level ground. Hearing a great commotion among them, I climbed on to one of the high exposed roots, and, looking over, saw a cow on the ground, apparently unable to rise, moaning and bellowing in a distressed way, while a number of her companions were crowding round and goring her. I remember that I was very much frightened at what I saw, and that I ran home as fast as I could.

What is the meaning of such an instinct? Darwin has but few words on the subject. 'Can we believe,' he says, in his posthumous 'Essay on Instinct,' 'when a wounded herbivorous animal returns to its own herd and is then attacked and gored, that this cruel and very common instinct is of any service to the species?' At the same time, he hints that such an instinct might in some circumstances be useful, and his hint has been developed into the current belief among naturalists on the subject. Here it is, in Dr. Romanes' words; 'We may readily

imagine that the instinct displayed by many herbivorous animals of goring sick and wounded companions, is really of use in countries where the presence of weak members in a herd is a source of danger to the herd from the prevalence of wild beasts.' Here it is assumed that the sick are set upon and killed, but it is not a fact; sickness and decay from age or some other cause are slow things, and increase imperceptibly, so that the sight of a drooping member grows familiar to the herd, as does that of a member with some malformation, or unusual shade of colour, or altogether white, as in the case of an albino.

Sick and weak members, as we have seen, while subject to some ill-treatment from their companions (only because they can be ill-treated with impunity), do not rouse the herd to a deadly animosity; the violent and fatal attack is often as not made on a member in perfect health and vigour and unwounded, although, owing to some accident, in great distress, and perhaps danger, at the moment.

The instinct is, then, not only useless but actually detrimental; and, this being so, the action of the herd in destroying one of its members is not even to be regarded as an instinct proper, but rather as an aberration of an instinct, a blunder, into which animals sometimes fall when excited to action in unusual circumstances.

The first thing that strikes us is that in these wild abnormal moments of social animals they are acting in violent contradiction to the whole tenor of their lives; that in turning against a distressed fellow they oppose themselves to the law of their being, to the whole body of instincts, primary and secondary, and habits, which have made it possible for them to exist together in communities. It is, I think, by reflecting on the abnormal character of such an action that we are led to a true interpretation of this 'dark saying of Nature.'

Every one is familiar with Bacon's famous passage about the dog, and the noble courage which that animal puts on when 'maintained by a man; who is to him in place of a God, or *melior natura*; which courage is manifestly such as that creature, without the confidence of a better nature than its own, could never attain.' Not so. The dog is a social animal, and acts instinctively in concert with his fellows; and the courage he manifests is of the family, not the individual. In the domestic state the man he is accustomed to associate with and obey stands to him in the place of the controlling pack, and to his mind, which is canine

and not human, is the pack. A similar 'noble courage,' greatly surpassing that exhibited on all other occasions, is displayed by an infinite number of mammals and birds of gregarious habits, when repelling the attacks of some powerful and dangerous enemy, or when they rush to the rescue of one of their captive fellows. Concerning this rage and desperate courage of social animals in the face of an enemy, we see (1) that it is excited by the distressed cries, or by the sight of a member of the herd or family flying from or struggling in the clutches of an enemy; (2) that it affects animals when a number of individuals are together, and is eminently contagious, like fear, that communicates itself, quick as lightning, from one to another until all are in a panic, and like the joyous emotion that impels the members of a herd or flock to rush simultaneously into play.

Now, it is a pretty familiar fact that animals acting instinctively, as well as men acting intelligently, have at times their delusions and their illusions, and see things falsely, and are moved to action by a false stimulus to their own disadvantage. When the individuals of a herd or family are excited to a sudden deadly rage by the distressed cries of one of their fellows, or by the sight of its bleeding wounds and the smell of its blood, or when they see it frantically struggling on the ground, or in the cleft of a tree or rock, as if in the clutches of a powerful enemy, they do not turn on it to kill but to rescue it.

In whatever way the rescuing instinct may have risen, whether simply through natural selection or, as is more probable, through an intelligent habit becoming fixed and hereditary, its effectiveness depends altogether on the emotion of overmastering rage excited in the animal—rage against a tangible enemy, visible or invisible, and excited by the cries or struggles of a suffering companion; clearly, then, it could not provide against the occasional rare accidents that animals meet with, which causes them to act precisely in the way they do when seized or struck down by an enemy. An illusion is the result of the emotion similar to the illusion produced by vivid expectation in ourselves, which has caused many a man to see in a friend and companion the adversary he looked to see, and to slay him in his false-seeing anger.

An illusion just as great, leading to action equally violent, but ludicrous rather than painful to witness, may be seen in dogs, when encouraged by a man to the attack, and made by his cries and gestures to expect that some animal they are accustomed to hunt is about to be unearthed or overtaken; and if, when they

are in this disposition, he cunningly exhibits and sets them on a dummy, made perhaps of old rags and leather and stuffed with straw, they will seize, worry, and tear it to pieces with the greatest fury, and without the faintest suspicion of its true character.

That wild elephants will attack a distressed fellow seemed astonishing to Darwin, when he remembered the case of an elephant after escaping from a pit helping its fellow to escape also. But it is precisely the animals, high or low in the organic scale, that are social, and possess the instinct of helping each other, that will on occasions attack a fellow in misfortune—such an attack being no more than a blunder of the helping instinct.

Felix de Azara records a rather cruel experiment on the temper of some tame rats confined in a cage. The person who kept them caught the tail of one of the animals and began sharply pinching it, keeping his hand concealed under the cage. Its cries of distress and struggles to free itself greatly excited the other rats, and, after rushing wildly round for some moments, they flew at their distressed companion, and fixing their teeth in its throat quickly despatched it. In this case, if the hand that held the tail had been visible in the cage the bites would have been inflicted on it; but no enemy was visible, yet the fury and impulse to attack an enemy was present in the animals. In such circumstances the excitement must be discharged, the instinct obeyed, and in the absence of any other object of attack the illusion is produced, and it discharges itself on the struggling companion. It is sometimes seen in dogs, when three or four or five are near together, that if one suddenly utters a howl or cry of pain, when no man is near it and no cause apparent, the others run to it, and seeing nothing, turn round and attack each other. Here the exciting cause—the cry for help—is not strong enough to produce the illusion which is sometimes fatal to the suffering member; but each dog mistakenly thinks that the others, or one of the others, inflicted the injury, and his impulse is to take the part of his injured companion. If the cry for help—caused perhaps by a sudden cramp or the prick of a thorn—is not very sharp or intense, the other dogs will not attack, but merely look and growl at each other in a suspicious way.

To go back to Azara's anecdote. Why, it may be asked—and the question has been put to me in conversation—if killing a distressed companion is of no advantage to the race, and if something must be attacked, why did not the rats in this case attack

the cage they were shut in and bite at the wood-work and wires ? Or, in the case related some months ago in this magazine by Mr. Andrew Lang, in which the members of a herd of cattle in Scotland turned with sudden amazing fury on one of the animals that had got wedged between two rocks and was struggling with distressed bellowings to free itself, why did they not attack the prisoning rocks instead of goring their unfortunate comrade to death ? For it is well known that animals will on occasions turn angrily upon and attack inanimate objects that cause them injury or hinder them in any way. And we know that this mythic faculty—the mind's projection of itself into visible nature—survives in ourselves, that there are exceptional moments in our lives when it comes back to us. No one, for instance, would be astonished to hear that any man, even a philosopher, had angrily kicked away or imprecated a stool or other inanimate object against which he had accidentally barked his shins. The answer is that there is no connexion between these two things—the universal mythic faculty of the mind, and that bold violent instinct of social animals of rushing to the rescue of a stricken or distressed companion, which has a definite, a narrow purpose—namely, to fall upon an enemy endowed not merely with the life and intelligence common to all things, including rocks, trees, and waters, but with animal form and motion.

I had intended in this place to give other instances, observed in several widely-separated species, including monkeys ; but it is not necessary, as I consider that all the facts, however varied, are covered by the theory I have suggested. Even a fact like the one mentioned in this article of cattle madly digging up the ground on which the blood of one of their kind had been spilt ; also such a fact as that of wild cattle or other animals caught in a trap or enclosure turning upon and destroying each other in their frenzy ; and the fact that some fierce-tempered carnivorous mammals will devour the companion they have killed. It is an instinct of animals like wolves and peccaries to devour an enemy that they have overcome and slain. Thus, when the jaguar captures a peccary out of a drove, and does not succeed in quickly escaping with his prize into a tree, he is instantly attacked and slain, and then consumed, even to the skin and bones. This is the wolf's and the peccary's instinct ; and the devouring of one of their own companions is the inevitable result of the mistake made in the first place of attacking and killing it. In no other circumstances—not even when starving—will they prey on their own species.

If the explanation I have offered should seem a true or highly probable one, it will, I feel sure, prove acceptable to many lovers of animals, who, regarding this seemingly ruthless instinct, not as an aberration but as in some vague way advantageous to animals in their struggle for existence, are yet unable to think of it without pain and horror; indeed, I know those who refuse to think of it at all, who would gladly disbelieve it if they could.

It should be a relief to them to be able to look on it no longer as something ugly and hateful, a blot on Nature, but as an illusion, a mistake, an unconscious crime, so to speak, that has for its motive the noblest passion that animals know—that sublime courage and daring which they exhibit in defence of a distressed companion. This fiery spirit in animals, which makes them forget their own safety, moves our hearts by its close resemblance to one of the most highly-prized human virtues; just as we are moved to intellectual admiration by the wonderful migratory instinct in birds that simulates some of the highest achievements of the mind of man. And we know that this beautiful instinct is also liable to mistakes—that many travellers leave us annually never to return. Such a mistake was undoubtedly the cause of the late visitation of Pallas' sand grouse; owing perhaps to some unusual atmospheric or dynamic condition, or to some change in the nervous system of the birds, they deviated widely from their usual route, to scatter in countless thousands over the whole of Europe and perish slowly in climates not suited to them; while others, overpassing the cold strange continent, sped on over colder stranger seas, to drop at last like *aërolites*, quenching their lives in the waves.

Whether because it is true, as Professor Freeman and some others will have it, that humanity is a purely modern virtue; or because the doctrine of Darwin, by showing that we are related to other forms of life, that our best feelings have their roots low down in the temper and instincts of the social species, has brought us nearer in spirit to the inferior animals, it is certain that our regard for them has grown, and is growing, and that new facts and fresh inferences that make us think more highly of them are increasingly welcome.

W. H. HUDSON.

The Three Fates.¹

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD, AUTHOR OF 'MR. ISAACS,'
'DR. CLAUDIUS,' &C.

CHAPTER X.

CONSTANCE did not find Johnson without asking her way many times, and losing it nearly as often, in the huge new building which was the residence and habitation of the newspaper. Nor did her appearance fail to excite surprise and admiration in the numerous reporters, messengers, and other members of the establishment who had glimpses of her as she passed rapidly on, from corridor to corridor. It happened that Johnson was in the room allotted to his department, which was not always the case at that hour, for he did much of his work at home.

'Come in!' he said sharply, without looking up from his writing. 'Well—what is it? Oh!' as he saw Miss Fearing standing before him. 'I beg your pardon, madam!'

'Are you Mr. Johnson? Am I disturbing you?' Constance asked. She was beginning to be surprised at her own audacity, and almost wished she had not come.

'Yes, madam. My name is Johnson, and my time is at your service,' said the pale young man, moving forward his best chair and offering it to her.

'Thank you. I will not trouble you long. I have here a novel in manuscript——'

Johnson interrupted her promptly.

'Excuse me, madam, but to avoid all misunderstanding I should tell you frankly from the first that we never publish fiction——'

'No, of course not,' Constance broke in. 'Let me tell my story.'

¹ Copyright 1891, by F. Marion Crawford.

Johnson bowed his head and assumed an attitude of attention.

'A friend of yours,' the young girl continued, 'has written this book. His name is Mr. George Winton Wood——'

'I know him very well.' Johnson wondered why George had not come himself, and wondered especially how he happened to dispose of so young and beautiful an ambassadress.

'Yes, he has often told me about you,' said Constance. 'Very well. He has written this novel, and I have read it. He thinks it is not worth publishing, and I think it is. I want to ask a great favour of you. Will you read it yourself?'

The pale young man hesitated. He was intensely conscientious, and he feared there was something queer about the business.

'Pardon me,' he said, 'does Mr. Wood know that you have brought it to me?'

'No, indeed. I would not have him know it for the world!'

'Then I would rather not——'

'But you must!' Constance exclaimed energetically. 'It is splendid, and he wants to burn it. It will make his reputation in a day, I assure you it will! And, besides, I would not promise him not to show it. Please, please, Mr. Johnson.'

'Well, if you are quite sure there is no promise.'

'Oh, quite, quite sure. And will you give me your opinion very soon? If you begin to read it you will not be able to lay it down.'

Johnson smiled as he thought of the hundreds of manuscripts he had read for publishers. He had never found much difficulty in laying aside any of them.

'It is true,' Constance replied. 'It is a great book. There has been nothing like it for ever so many years.'

'Very well, madam. Give me the screed and I will read it. When shall I send, or would you rather——'

He stopped, not knowing whether she wished to give her name. Constance hesitated too, and blushed faintly.

'I am Miss Fearing,' she said. 'I live in Washington Square. Will you write down the address? Come and see me, or are you too busy?'

'I will bring you the manuscript the day after to-morrow, Miss Fearing.'

'Oh please, yes. Not later, because I cannot go out of town until I know; I mean I want to go to Newport as soon as possible. Come after five. Will you? I mean if it is not giving you really too much trouble.'

'Not in the least, Miss Fearing,' said the pale young man with alacrity. He was thinking that, for the sake of conversing a quarter of an hour with such an exceedingly amiable young lady, he would put himself to vastly more trouble than was involved in stopping at Washington Square on his way up town in the afternoon.

'Thank you. You are so kind. Good-bye, Mr. Johnson.' She held out her hand, but Johnson seized his hat and prepared to accompany her.

'Let me take you to the Elevated, Miss Fearing,' he said.

'Thank you very much, but I have a carriage down stairs,' said Constance. 'If you would show me the way—it is so very complicated.'

'Certainly, Miss Fearing.'

Constance wondered why he repeated her name so often; whether it was a habit he had, or whether he was nervous, or whether he thought it good manners. She was not so much impressed with him at first sight as she had expected to be. He had not said anything at all clever, though it was true that there had not been many opportunities for wit in the conversation that had taken place. He belonged to a type with which she was not familiar, and she could not help asking herself whether George had other friends like him, who, if she knew them, would call her by her name half-a-dozen times in three minutes, and if he had many of them whether, in the event of her marrying him, she would be expected to know them all and to like them all for his sake. Not that there was anything common or vulgar about this Johnson whom George praised so much. He spoke quietly, without any especial accent, and quite without affectation. He was dressed with perfect simplicity and good taste, there was nothing awkward in his manner—indeed, Constance vaguely wished that he might have shown some little awkwardness or shyness. He was evidently a man of the highest education, and George said he was a man of the highest intelligence, but as Constance gave him her hand and he closed the door of the brougham, the impression came over her with startling vividness that Mr. Johnson was emphatically not a man she would ask to dinner. She felt sure that if she met him in society she should feel a vague surprise at his being there, though she might find it impossible to say why he should not. On the other hand, though she was aware that she put herself in his power to some extent, since it was impossible that he should not guess that her interest in George Wood was the result of

something at least a little stronger than ordinary friendship, yet she very much preferred to trust this stranger rather than to confide in any of the men she knew in society, not excepting John Bond himself.

At five o'clock on the day agreed upon, Constance was informed that 'a gentleman, a Mr. Johnson,' had called, saying that he came by appointment.

'You are so kind,' said Constance, as he sat down opposite to her. He held the manuscript in his hand. 'And what do you think of it? Am I not right?'

'I am very much surprised,' said the pale young man. 'It is a remarkable book, Miss Fearing, and it ought to be published at once.'

Constance had felt sure of the answer, but she blushed with pleasure, a fact which did not escape Johnson's quiet scrutiny.

'You really think Mr. Wood has talent?' she asked, for the sake of hearing another word of praise.

'There is more talent in one of its pages than in the whole aggregate works of half-a-dozen ordinarily successful writers,' Johnson answered with emphasis.

'I am so glad you think so—so glad. And what is the first thing to be done in order to get this published? You see, I must ask your help, now that you have given your opinion.'

'Will you leave the matter in my hands, Miss Fearing?'

Constance hesitated. There was assuredly no one who would be more likely to do the proper thing in the matter, and yet she reflected that she knew nothing or next to nothing of the man before her, except from George's praise of his intelligence.

'Suppose that a publisher accepts the book,' she said warily, 'what will he give Mr. Wood for it?'

'Ten per cent. on the advertised retail price,' Johnson answered promptly.

'Of every copy sold, I suppose,' said Constance, who had a remarkably good head for business. 'That is not much, is it? And besides, how is one to know that the publisher is honest? One hears such dreadful stories about those people.'

Johnson laughed a little.

'Faith is the evidence of things unseen, supported by reasonable and punctual payments,' he said. 'Publishers are not all Cretans, Miss Fearing. There be certain just men among them who have reputations to lose.'

'And none of them would do better than that by the book?'

But of course you know. Have you ever published anything yourself? Forgive my ignorance.'

'I once published a volume of critical essays,' Johnson answered.

'What was the title? I must read it—please tell me.'

'It is not worth the trouble, I assure you. The title was—*Critical Essays*, by William Johnson.'

'Thank you; I will remember. And will you really do your very best for Mr. Wood's book? Do you think it could be published in a fortnight?'

'A fortnight!' exclaimed Johnson, aghast at Constance's ignorance. 'Three months would be the shortest time possible.'

'Three months! Dear me, what a length of time!'

Johnson rapidly explained as well as he could the principal reasons why it sometimes takes longer to publish a book than to write one. He exchanged a few more words with Constance, promising to make every effort to push on the appearance of the novel, but advising her to expect no news whatever for several months. Then he took his leave.

Half an hour later Constance was at her bookseller's.

'I want a book called *Critical Essays*, by William Johnson,' she said. 'Have you got it, Mr. Popples?'

She waited some time before it was brought to her. Then she pretended to look through it carefully, examining the headings of the papers that were collected in it.

'Is it worth reading?' she asked carelessly.

'Excellent, Miss Fearing,' answered the gray-haired professional bookseller. He had known Constance since she had been a mere child with a passion for Mr. Walter Crane's picture-books. 'Excellent,' he repeated emphatically. 'A little dry, perhaps, but truly excellent.'

'Has it been a success, do you know?'

'Yes, I know, Miss Fearing,' answered Mr. Popples, with a meaning smile. 'I know very well. I happen to know that it did not pay for the printing.'

'Did the author not even get ten per cent. on the advertised retail price?' Constance inquired.

Mr. Popples stared at her for a moment, evidently wondering where she had picked up the phrase. He immediately suspected her of having perpetrated a literary misdeed in one volume.

'No, Miss Fearing. I happen to know that Mr. Johnson did not get ten per cent. on the advertised retail price of his book;

in point of fact, he got nothing at all for it, excepting a number of very flattering notices. But, excuse me, Miss Fearing, if you were thinking of venturing upon publishing anything——' His voice dropped to a confidential pitch.

'I?' exclaimed Constance.

'Well, Miss Fearing, it could be done very discreetly, you know. Just a little volume of sweet verse? Is that it, Miss Fearing? Now, you know, that kind of thing would have a run in society, and if you would like to put it into my hands, I know a publisher——'

'But, Mr. Popples,' interrupted Constance, recovering from her amusement so far as to be able to interrupt the current of the bookseller's engaging offers, 'I never wrote anything in my life. I asked out of sheer curiosity.'

Mr. Popples smiled blandly, without the least appearance of disappointment.

'Well, well, Miss Fearing, you are quite right,' he said. 'In point of fact, those little literary ventures of young ladies very rarely do come to much, do they? To misquote the Laureate, Miss Fearing, we might say that "Men must write and women must read!" Eh, Miss Fearing?'

The old fellow chuckled at his bad joke, as he wrapped up the volume of *Critical Essays* by William Johnson, and handed it across the table. There were only tables in Mr. Popples's establishment; he despised counters.

'Anything else to serve you, Miss Fearing? A novel or two, for the May weather? No? Let me take it to your carriage.'

'Thanks. I am walking, but I will carry it. Good evening.'

'Good evening, Miss Fearing. Your parasol is here. Walking this evening? In the May weather? Good evening, Miss Fearing.'

And Mr. Popples bowed his favourite customer out of his establishment, with a very kindly look in his tired old spectacled eyes.

Constance had got what she had come for. If William Johnson, author of *Critical Essays*, a journalist and a man presumably acquainted with all the ins and outs of publishing, had made nothing by his successful book, George would be doing very well in obtaining ten per cent. on the advertised retail price of every copy of his novel which was sold. Constance had been mistaken when she had doubted Johnson, but she did not regret her doubt in the least. After all, she had undertaken the responsi-

bility of George's book, and she could not conscientiously believe everything she was told by strangers concerning its chances. Mr. Popples, however, was above suspicion, and had, moreover, no reason for telling that the *Critical Essays* had brought their author no remuneration. Johnson's face, too, inspired confidence, as well as George's own trust in him. Constance felt that she had done all she could, and she accordingly made her preparations for going out of town.

She was glad to get away, in order to study herself. The habit of introspection had grown upon her, for she had encouraged herself in it ever since she had begun to feel that George was something more to her than a friend. Her over-conscientious nature feared to make some mistake which might embitter his life as well as her own. She was in constant dread of letting herself be carried away by the impulse of a moment to say something that might bind her to marry him, before she could feel that she loved him wholly as she wished to love him. On looking back, she bitterly regretted having allowed him to kiss her cheek on that morning in the Park. She had been under the influence of a strong emotion, produced by the conclusion of his book, and she seemed in her own eyes to have acted in a way quite unworthy of herself. Had she been able to carry her analysis further, she would have discovered that behind her distrust of herself she felt a lingering distrust of George. A year earlier she had thought it possible that he was strongly attracted by her fortune. Now, however, she would have scouted the idea if it had presented itself in that shape. But it was present, nevertheless, in a more subtle form.

'He loves me sincerely,' she said to herself. 'He would marry me now if I were a pauper. But would he have loved me from the first if I had been poor?'

It was not often that she put the question, even in this way, but as it belonged to that class of vicious inquiries which it is impossible to answer, it tormented her perpetually by suggesting a whole series of doubts, useless in themselves and mischievous in their consequences. She was convinced of two things. First, that she was unaccountably influenced by George's presence to say and do things which she was determined at other times that she would never say or do; and, secondly, that, whether she loved him truly or not, she could not imagine herself as loving any one else nearly so much. Under these circumstances, it was clearly better that she should not see him for a considerable time. She would

thus withdraw herself from the sphere of his direct influence, and she would have leisure to study and weigh her own feelings, with a view to reaching a final decision. Nevertheless, she looked forward to the moment of parting from him with something that was very like pain. Contrary to her expectations, the interview passed off with little show of emotion on either side.

They talked for some time about the book, Constance assuming an air of mystery regarding its future, and George speaking of it with the utmost indifference. At the last minute, when he had risen to go and was standing beside her, she laid her hand upon his arm.

'You do not think I am heartless, do you?' she asked, looking at a particular button on his coat.

'No,' George answered. 'I think you are very sincere. I sometimes wish you would forget to be so sincere with yourself. I wish you would let yourself run away with yourself now and then.'

'That would be very wrong. It would be very unfair and unjust to you. Suppose—only suppose, you know—that I made up my mind to marry you, and then discovered when it was too late that I did not love you. Would not that be dreadful? Is it not better to wait a little longer?'

'You shall never say that I have pressed you into a decision against your will,' said George, betraying in one speech, his youth, his ignorance of woman in general, and his almost Quixotic readiness to obey Constance in anything and everything.

'You are very generous,' she answered, still looking at the button. 'But I will not feel that I am spoiling your life—no, let me speak—to keep you in this position much longer would be doing that, indeed it would. In six months from now you will be famous. I know it, though you laugh at me. Then you will be able to marry whom you please. I cannot marry you now, for I do not love you enough. You are free, you must not feel that I want to bind you, do you understand? You will travel this summer, for you have told me that you are going to make several visits in country houses. If you see any one you like better than me, do not feel that you are tied by any promise. It would not break my heart if you married some one else.'

In spite of her calmness, there was a slight tremor in her voice which did not escape George's ear.

'I shall never love any one else,' he said simply.

'You may. I may. But waiting must have a limit——'

'Say this, Constance,' said George. 'Say that if, by next May, you do not love me less than you do now, you will be my wife.'

'No. I must love you more. If I love you better than now, it will show that my love is always to increase, and I will marry you.'

'In May?'

'In May, next year. But this is no engagement. I make no promise, and I will take none from you. You are free, and so am I, until the first of May——'

'I shall never be free again, dear,' said George happily, for he anticipated great things of the strange agreement she proposed. He put his arm about her and drew her to him very tenderly. Another second and his lips would have touched her cheek, just where they had touched it once before. But Constance drew back quickly and slipped from his arm.

'No, no,' she laughed, 'that is not a part of the agreement. It is far too binding.'

George's face was grave and sad. Her action had given him a sharp thrust of painful disappointment, and he did his best not to hide it. Constance looked at him a moment.

'Am I not right?' she asked.

'You are always right—even when you give me pain,' he answered with a shade of bitterness.

'Have I given you pain now?'

'Yes.'

'Did you think, from the way I behaved, that I would let you kiss me for good-bye?'

'Yes.'

'You shall not say that I hurt you, and you shall not go away believing I have deceived you,' said Constance, coming back to him.

She put her two hands round his neck and drew down his head. Then she kissed him softly on both cheeks.

'I did not mean to hurt you. Good-

Bye,' she said. 'I am feeling very happy, but persuaded that no man could ever understand the heart of a woman. It seemed to be the only thing in the world worth knowing. He had ample time for reflection after, but without the reality before him it grew more and more perplexing.'

The weather grew very warm in the end of June, and George left New York. He had written much in the course of the year and had earned enough money to give himself a rest during the hot months. He tried to persuade his father to accompany him and to spend the time by the seaside while George himself made his promised visits. But Jonah Wood declared that he preferred New York in the summer, and that nothing would induce him to waste money on such folly as travelling. To tell the truth, the old gentleman had grown accustomed to rigid economy in his little house in town, but he could not look forward with any pleasure to the discomforts of second-rate hotels in second-rate places. So George went away alone.

He had already begun another book. He did not look upon his first effort in the light of a book at all, but he had tasted blood, and the thirst was upon him, and he must needs quench it. This time, however, he set himself steadily to work to do the very best he could, labouring to repress his own vivacity and trying to keep out of the fever that was threatening to carry him away outside of himself. He limited his work strictly to a small amount every day, polishing every sentence and thinking out every phrase before it was set down. Working in this way, he had written about half a volume by the end of August, when he found himself in a pleasant country-house by the sea in the midst of a large party of people. He had all but forgotten his first book, and had certainly but a very dim recollection of what it contained. He looked back upon its feverish production as upon a sort of delirious dream during which he had raved in a language now strange to his memory.

One afternoon, in the midst of a game of lawn-tennis, a telegram was brought to him :—

‘Rob Roy and Co. publish book immediately England and America. Have undertaken that you accept royalty ten per cent. retail advertised price. Wire reply. C. F.’

George possessed a very considerable power of concealing his emotions, but this news was almost too much for his equanimity. He thrust the despatch into his pocket and went on playing, but he lost the game in a shameful fashion and was roundly abused by his cousin, Mamie Trimm, who chanced to be his partner. Mamie and her mother were stopping in the same house, by what Mrs. Sherrington Trimm considered a rather unfortunate accident, since Mamie was far too fond of George already. In reality, the excellent hostess had an idea that George loved the girl, and as the

match seemed most appropriate in her eyes, she had brought them together on purpose.

As soon as possible he slipped away, put on his flannel jacket and went to the telegraph-office, reading the despatch he had received over and over again as he hurried along the path, and trying to compose his answer at the same time. Constance's message seemed amazingly neat, businesslike and concise, and he wondered whether some one else had not been concerned in the affair. The phrase about the royalty did not sound like a woman's expression, though she might have copied it from the publisher's letter.

George had formerly imagined that if his first performance were really in danger of being published, he should do everything in his power to prevent such a catastrophe. He felt no such impulse now, however. Messrs. Rob Roy & Company were very serious people, great publishers, whose name alone gave a book a chance of success. They bore an exceptional reputation in the world of books, and George knew very well that they would not publish trash. But he was not elated by the news, however much surprised he might be. It was strange, indeed, that a firm of such good judgment should have accepted his novel, but it could not be but a failure, all the same. He would get the proofs as soon as possible, and he would do what he could to make the work decently presentable by inserting plentiful improvements.

His answer to Constance's telegram was short:—

'Deplore catastrophe. Pity public. Thank publisher. Agree terms. Where are proofs? G. W.'

By the time the proofs were ready, George was once more in New York, though Constance had not yet returned. He was hard at work upon his second book, and looked with some disgust at the package of printed matter that lay folded as it had come, upon his table. Nevertheless he opened the bundle and looked at them.

'Confound them!' he exclaimed. 'They have sent me a paged proof instead of galleys!'

It was evident that he could not insert many changes, where the matter was already arranged in book form, and he anticipated endless annoyance in pasting in extensive 'riders' of writing-paper in order to get room for the vast changes he considered necessary.

An hour later he was lying back in his easy-chair reading

his own novel with breathless interest. He had not yet made a correction of any kind in the text. It was not until the following day that he was able to go over it all more calmly, but even then he found that little could be done to improve it. When he had finished, he sent the proofs back and wrote a letter to Constance.

'I have read the book over,' he wrote, among other things, 'and it is not so bad as I supposed. I know that it cannot be good, but I am convinced that worse novels have found their way into print, if not into notice. I take back at least one-tenth of all I said about it formerly, and I will not abuse it in the future, leaving that office to those who will doubtless command much forcible language in support of their just opinion. Am I to thank you, too? I hardly know. There are other things for which I would rather be in a position to owe you thanks. However, the die is cast, you have made a skipping-rope of the Rubicon and have whisked it under my feet without my consent. Let the poor book take its chance. Its birth was happy, may its death at least be peaceful.'

To this Constance replied three weeks later:—

'I am glad to see that a disposition to repentance has set in. You are wise in not abusing my book any more. You ought to be doing penance in sackcloth and ashes before that bench in Central Park on which I sat when I told you it was good. The children would all laugh at you, and throw stones at you, and I should be delighted. I am not coming to town until it is published and is a success. Grace thinks I have gone into speculations, because I get so many letters and telegrams about it. I shall not tell you what the people who read the manuscript said about it. You can find that out for yourself.'

George awoke one morning to find himself, if not famous, at least the topic of the day in more countries than one. A week had not elapsed before the papers were full of notices of his book and speculations as to his personality. No one seemed to consider that George Winton Wood, the novelist, could be the same man as G. W. Wood, the signer of modest articles in the magazines. The first review called him an unknown person of surprising talent, the second did not hesitate to describe him as a man of genius, and the third—branded him as a plagiarist who had stolen his plot from a forgotten novel of the beginning of the century and had somehow—this was not clear in the article—made capital out of the writings of Macrobius; he was a villain, a poacher, a pickpocket

novelist, a literary body-snatcher; in fact, in the eyes of all but the over-lax law, little short of a thief. George knew that sort of style, and he read the abuse over again and again with unmitigated delight. He had done as much himself in the good old days when the editors would let him. He did not show this particular notice to his father, however, and only handed him those that were favourable—and they were many. Jonah Wood sat reading them all day long, over and over again.

‘I am very glad, George,’ he said repeatedly. ‘I am very proud of you. It is splendid. But do you think all this will bring you much pecuniary remuneration?’

‘Ten per cent. on the advertised retail price of each copy,’ was George’s answer.

He entered the railway station one day and was amazed to see the walls of the place covered with huge placards, three feet square, bearing the name of his book and his own, alternately, in huge black letters on a white ground. The young man at the bookstall was doing a thriving business. George went up to him.

‘That book seems to sell,’ he said quietly.

‘Like hot cakes,’ answered the vendor, offering him his own production. ‘One dollar twenty-five cents.’

‘Thank you,’ said George. ‘I would not give so much for a novel.’

‘Well, there are others will, I guess,’ answered the young man. ‘Step aside, if you please, and give these ladies a chance.’

George smiled and turned away.

CHAPTER XI.

SHERRINGTON TRIMM had kept Mr. Craik’s secret as well as he could, but although he had not told his wife anything positive concerning the will that had been so hastily drawn up, he had found it impossible not to convey to Totty such information about the matter as was manifestly negative. She had seen very soon that he considered the inheritance of her brother’s money as an illusion, upon which he placed no faith whatever, and she had understood that in advising her not to think too much about it, he meant to do more than administer one of his customary rebukes to her covetousness. At last, she determined to know the truth, and pressed him with the direct question.

‘So far as I know, my dear,’ he answered gravely, ‘you will

never get that money, so you may just as well put the subject out of your mind, and be satisfied with what you have.'

Neither diplomacy nor cajolery nor reproaches could force anything more definite than this from Sherrington Trimm's discreet lips, though Totty used all her weapons, and used them very cleverly, in her untiring efforts to find out the truth. Was Tom going to leave his gold to a gigantic charity? Sherry's round pink face grew suddenly stony. Was it a hospital or an asylum for idiots?—he really might tell her! His expression never changed. Totty was in despair, and her curiosity tormented her in a way that would have done credit to the gad-fly which tortured Io of old. Neither by word, nor look, nor deed could Sherry be made to betray his brother-in-law's secret. He was utterly impenetrable, as soon as the subject was brought up, and Totty even fancied that he knew beforehand when she was about to set some carefully-devised trap for him, so ready was he to oppose her wiles.

On the other hand, since old Mr. Craik had recovered, his sister had shown herself more than usually anxious to please him. In this she argued as her husband had done, saying that a man who had changed his will once might very possibly change it again. She therefore spared no pains in consulting Tom's pleasure whenever occasion offered, and she employed her best tact in making his life agreeable to him. He, on his part, was even more diverted than she intended that he should be, and he watched all her moves with inward amusement. There had never been any real sympathy between them. He had been the first child, and several others had died in infancy during a long series of years, Totty, the youngest of all, alone surviving, separated from her brother in age by nearly twenty years. From her childhood she had always been trying to get something from him, and whenever the matters in hand did not chance to clash with his own interests he had granted her request. Indeed, on the whole, and considering the man's grasping character, he had treated her with great generosity. Totty's gratitude, however, though always sincere, was systematically prophetic in regard to favours to come, and Tom had often wondered whether anything in the world would satisfy her.

Of late she seemed to have developed an intense interest in the means of prolonging life, and she did not fail to give him the benefit of all the newest theories on the subject. Tom, however, did not feel that he was going to die, and was more and more irritated by her officious suggestions. One day she took upon

herself to be more than usually pressing. He had been suffering from a slight cold, and she had passed an anxious week.

'There is nothing for you, Tom,' she said, 'but a milk cure and massage. They say there is nothing like it. It is perfectly wonderful——'

Her brother raised his bent head and looked keenly at her, while a sour smile passed over his face.

'Look here, Totty,' he answered, 'don't you think I should keep better in camphor?'

'How can you be so unkind!' exclaimed Totty, blushing scarlet. She rarely blushed at all, and her brother's amusement increased, until it reached its climax and broke out in a hard, rattling laugh.

After this Mrs. Trimm grew more cautious. She talked less of remedies and cures and practised with great care a mournfully sympathetic expression. In the course of a week or two this plan also began to wear upon Craik's nerves, for she made a point of seeing him almost every day.

'I say, Totty,' he said suddenly. 'If anybody is dead, tell me. If you think anybody is going to die, send for the doctor. But if they are all alive and well, don't go round looking like an undertaker's wife when the season has been too healthy.'

'How can you expect me to look gay?' Totty asked with a sad smile. 'Do you think it makes me happy to see you going on in this way?'

'Which way?' inquired Mr. Craik with a pleased grin.

'Why, you won't have massage, and you won't take the milk cure, and you won't go to Aix, and you won't let me do anything for you, and—and I'm so unhappy! Oh Tom, how unkind you are!'

Thereupon Mrs. Trimm burst into tears with much feeling. Tom Craik looked at her for some seconds, and then, being in his own house, rang the bell, sent for the housekeeper and a bottle of salts, and left Totty to recover as best she might. He knew very well that those same tears were genuine, and that they had their source in anger and disappointment rather than in any sympathy for himself, and he congratulated himself upon having changed his will in time.

The old man watched George Wood's increasing success with an interest that would have surprised the latter if he had known anything of it. It seemed as if, by assuring him the reversion of the fortune, Tom Craik had given him a push in the right direc-

tion. Since that time, indeed, George's luck had begun to turn, and now, though still unconscious of the wealth that awaited him, he was already far on the road to celebrity and independence. The lonely old man of business found a new and keen excitement in following the doings of the young fellow for whom he had secretly prepared such an overwhelming surprise. He was curious to see whether George would lose his head, whether he would turn into the fatuous idol of afternoon tea-parties, or whether he would fall into vulgar dissipation, whether he would quarrel with his father as soon as he was independent, or whether he would spend his earnings in making the old gentleman more comfortable.

Tom Craik cared very little what George did, provided he did something. What he most regretted was that he could not possibly be present to enjoy the surprise he had planned. It amused him to think out the details of his future. If, for instance, George took to drinking and gambling, losing and wasting at night what he had laboured hard to earn during the day, what a moment that would be in his life when he should be told that Tom Craik was dead, and that he was master of a great fortune! The old man chuckled over the idea, and fancied he could see George's face when, having lost more than he could possibly pay, his young eyes heavy with wine, his hand trembling with excitement, he would be making his last desperate stand at poker in the quiet upper room of a gambling club. He would lose his nerve, show his cards, lose and sink back in his chair with a stare of horror. At that moment the door would open, and Sherry Trimm would come in and whisper a few words in his ear. Tom Craik liked to imagine the young fellow's bound of surprise, the stifled cry of amazement that would escape from his lips, the doubts, the fears that would beset him until the money was his, and then the sudden cure that would follow. Yes, thought Tom, there was no such cure for a spendthrift as a fortune, a real fortune. To make a man love money, give it to him all at once in vast quantities—provided he is not a fool. And George was no fool. He had already proved that.

There was something satanic in Mr. Craik's speculations. He knew the world well. It amused him to fancy George admired and courted as a literary lion, but feared by all judicious mammas, as only young, poor and famous literary lions are feared. How the sentimental young ladies would crowd about him and offer him tea, cake, and plots for his novels! And how the ring of mothers would draw their daughters away from him and freeze

him with airs politely cold ! How two or three would be gathered together in one corner of the room to say to each other that two or three others in the opposite corner were foolishly exposing their daughters to the charms of an adventurer, for his books bring him in nothing, my dear, not a cent—Mr. Popples told me so ! And how the compliment would be returned upon the two or three, by the other two or three, with usurious compound interest ! Enter to them, thought Craik, another of their tribe—what do you think, my dears ? Tom Craik left all that money to George Wood, house, furniture, pictures, horses and carriages—everything ! Just think ! I really must go and speak to the dear fellow ! And how they would all be impelled, at the same moment, by the same charitable thought ! How they would all glide forward, during the next quarter of an hour, impatient to thaw with intimacy what they had lately wished to freeze with politeness, and how, a little later, each would say to her lovely daughter as they went home—‘ You know Georgey Wood ’—for it would be Georgey at once—‘ is such a good fellow, so famous and yet so modest, so unassuming when you think how enormously rich he is.’ ‘ Is he rich, mamma ? ’ ‘ Why, yes, Kitty—or Totty, or Dottie, or Hattie, or Nelly—he has all Tom Craik’s money, and that gem of a house to live in, and the pictures and everything, and your cousin—or your aunt—Totty is furious about it—but he is such a nice fellow.’ There would not be much difficulty about getting a wife for the ‘ nice fellow ’ then, thought Thomas Craik.

And one or other of these things might have actually happened, precisely as Thomas Craik foresaw, if that excellent and worthy man, Sherrington Trimm, had not unexpectedly fallen ill during the spring that followed George Wood’s first success. His illness was severe and was undoubtedly caused by too much hard work, and was superinduced by a moderate but unchanging taste for canvas-backs, truffles boiled in madeira, and an especial brand of brut champagne. Sherry recovered, indeed, but was ordered to Carlsbad in Bohemia without delay. Totty found that it was quite impossible for her to accompany him, considering the precarious state of her brother’s health. To leave Tom at such a time would be absolutely heartless. Sherrington Trimm expressed a belief that Tom would last through the summer and perhaps through several summers, as he never did a stroke of work and was as wiry as hairpins. He might have added that his brother-in-law did not subsist upon cryptogams and brut wines, but Sherry resolutely avoided suggesting to himself that the daily consump-

tion of those delicacies was in any way connected with his late illness. His wife, however, shook her head, and, quoting glibly three or four medical authorities, assured him that Tom's state was very far from satisfactory. Mamie might go with her father, if she pleased, but Totty would not leave the sinking ship.

'Till the rats leave it,' added Mr. Trimm viciously. His wife gave him a mournfully severe glance and left him to make his preparations.

So he went abroad, and was busy for some time with the improvement of his liver and the reduction of his superfluous fat, and John Bond managed the business in his stead. John Bond was a very fine fellow and did well whatever he undertook, so that Mr. Trimm felt no anxiety about their joint affairs. John himself was delighted to have an opportunity of showing what he could do, and he looked forward to marrying Grace Fearing in the summer, considering that his position was now sufficiently assured. He was far too sensible a man to have any scruples about taking a rich wife while he himself was poor, but he was too independent to live upon Grace's fortune, and as she was so young he had put off the wedding until he felt that he was making enough money to have all that he wanted for himself without her aid. When they were married she could do what she pleased without consulting him, and he would do as he liked without asking her advice or assistance. He considered that marriage could not be happy where either of the couple was dependent upon the other for necessities or luxuries, and that domestic peace depended largely on the exclusion of all monetary transactions between man and wife. John Bond was a typical man of his class, tall, fair, good-looking, healthy, active, energetic and keen. He had never had a day's illness nor an hour's serious annoyance. He had begun life in the right way, at the right end, and in a cheerful spirit. There was no morbid sentimentality about him, no unnecessary development of the imagination, no nervousness, no shyness, no underrating of other people and no overrating of himself. He knew he could never be great or famous, and that he could only be John Bond as long as he lived. John Bond he would be, then, and nothing else, but John Bond should come to mean a great deal more before he had done with the name. It should mean the keenest, most hardworking, most honest, most reliable, most clean-handed lawyer in the city of New York. There was a breezy atmosphere of truth, soap, and enterprise about John Bond.

Before going abroad Sherrington Trimm asked Tom Craik whether he should tell his junior partner of the existence of a will in favour of George Wood. Mr. Craik hesitated before he answered.

'Well, Sherry,' he said at last, 'considering the uncertainty of human life, as Totty says, and considering that you are more used to Extra Dry than to Carlsbad waters, you had better tell him. There is no knowing what tricks that stuff may play with you. Let it be in confidence.'

'Of course,' said Mr. Trimm. 'I would rather trust John Bond than trust myself.'

The same day he imparted the secret to his partner. The latter nodded gravely and then fell into a fit of abstraction which was very rare with him. He knew a great deal of the relations existing between Constance and George Wood, and in his frank, lawyer-like distrust of people's motives he had shared Grace's convictions about the man, though he had always treated him with indifference and always avoided speaking of him.

There are some people whose curiosity finds relief in asking questions, even though they obtain no answers to their inquiries. Totty was one of these, and she missed her husband more than she had thought possible. There had been a sort of satisfaction in tormenting him about the will, accompanied by a constant hope that he might one day forget his discretion in a fit of anger and let out the secret she so much desired to learn. Now, however, there was no one to cross-examine except Tom himself, and she would as soon have thought of asking him a direct question in the matter as of trying to make holes in a mill-stone with a darning-needle. Her curiosity had therefore no outlet, and as her interest was so directly concerned at the same time, it is no wonder that she fell into a deplorably unsettled state of mind. For a long time not a ray of light illuminated the situation, and Totty actually began to grow thin under the pressure of her constant anxiety. At last she hit upon a plan for discovering the truth, so simple that she wondered how she had failed to think of it before.

Nothing, indeed, could be more easy of execution than what she contemplated. Her husband kept in a desk in his room a set of duplicate keys to the deed-boxes in his office. Among these there must be also the one that opened her brother's box. These iron cases were kept in a strong-room that opened into a small corridor between Sherrington Trimm's private study and the outer rooms where the clerks worked. Totty had her own box there,

separate from her husband's, and she remembered that there was one not far from hers on which was painted her brother's name. She would have no difficulty in entering the strong-room alone, on pretence of depositing a deed. Was she not the wife of the senior partner, and had she not often done the same thing before? If her brother had made a new will, it must be in that box, where he kept such papers as possessed only a legal value. One glance would show her all she wanted to know, and her mind would be at rest from the wearing anxiety that now made her life almost unbearable.

She opened the desk and had no difficulty in finding the key to her brother's box. It was necessary to take something in the nature of a deed, to hold in her hand as an excuse for entering the strong-room, for she did not want to take anything out of it, lest John Bond, who would see her, should chance to notice the fact and should mention it to her husband when he came back. On the other hand, it would not do to deposit an empty envelope, sealed and marked as though it contained something valuable. Mrs. Trimm never did things by halves, nor was she ever so unwise as to leave traces of her tactics behind her. A palpable fraud like an empty envelope might at some future time be used against her. To take any document away from the office, even if she returned it the next day, would be to expose herself to a cross-examination from Sherrington when he came home, for he knew the state of her affairs and would know also that she never needed to consult the papers she kept at the office. There was nothing for it but to have a real document of some sort. Totty sat down and thought the matter over for a quarter of an hour. Then she ordered her carriage and drove down town to the office of a broker who sometimes did business for her and her husband.

'I have made a bet,' she said, with a little laugh, 'and I want you to help me to win it.'

The broker expressed his readiness to put the whole New York Stock Exchange at her disposal in five minutes, if that were of any use to her.

'Yes,' said Totty. 'I have a bet that I will buy a share in something—say for a hundred dollars—that I will keep it a year, and that at the end of that time it will be worth more than I gave for it.'

'One way of winning the bet would be to buy several shares in different things and declare the winner afterwards. One of the lot will go up.'

'That would not be fair,' said Totty with a laugh. 'I must say what it is I have bought. Can you give me something of the kind—now? I want to take it away with me, to show it.'

The broker went out and returned a few minutes later with what she wanted—a certificate of stock to the amount of one hundred dollars in a well-known undertaking.

'If anything has a chance, this has,' said the broker, putting it into an envelope and handing it to her. 'Oh no, Mrs. Trimm, never mind paying for it!' he added with a careless laugh. 'Give it back to me when you have done with it.'

But Totty preferred to pay her money, and did so before she departed. Ten minutes later she was at her husband's office. Her heart beat a little faster as she asked John Bond to open the strong-room for her. She hoped that something would happen to occupy him while she was within.

'Let me help you,' he said, entering the place with her.

The strong-room was lighted from above by a small skylight over a heavy grating, the boxes being arranged on shelves around the walls. John Bond went straight to the one that belonged to Totty and moved it forward a little so that she could open it. She held her envelope ostentatiously in one hand and felt for her key in her pocket with her other. She knew which was hers and which was her brother's, because Tom's had a label fastened to it with his name, whereas her own had none.

'Thanks,' she said, as she turned the key in the lock and raised the lid. 'Please do not stay here, Mr. Bond. I want to look over a lot of things so as to put this I have brought into the right place.'

'Well—if I cannot be of any use,' said John. 'I have rather a busy day. Please call me to shut the room when you have finished.'

Totty breathed more freely when she was alone. She could hear John cross the corridor and enter the private office. A moment later everything was quiet. With a quick, stealthy movement she slipped the other key into the box labelled 'T. Craik,' turned it and lifted the cover. Her heart was beating violently.

Fortunately for her the will was the last paper that had been put with the others, and lay on the top of them all. The heavy blue envelope was sealed and marked 'Will' with the date. Totty turned pale as she held it in her hands. She had not the slightest intention of destroying it, whatever it might contain, but even to break the seal and read it looked very like a criminal act. On the other hand, when she realised that she held in her

hand the answer to all her questions, and that by a turn of the fingers she could satisfy all her boundless curiosity, she knew that it was of no use to attempt resistance in the face of such a temptation. She realised, indeed, that she would not be able to restore the seal, and that she must not hope to hide the fact that somebody had tampered with the will, but the thought could not deter her from carrying out her intention. As she turned, her sleeve caught on the corner of the box, which she had inadvertently left open, and the lid fell with a sharp snap. Instantly John Bond's footstep was heard in the corridor.

Totty had barely time to withdraw the key from her brother's box and to bury the will under her own papers when John entered the room.

'Oh!' he exclaimed in evident surprise, 'I thought I heard you shut your box, and that you had finished.'

'No,' said Totty in an unsteady voice, bending her pale face over her documents. 'The lid fell, but I opened it again. I will call you when I come out.'

John returned to his work without any suspicion of what had happened. Then Totty extracted a hairpin from the coils of her brown hair and tried to lift the seal of the will from the paper to which it was so firmly attached. But she only succeeded in damaging it. There was nothing to be done but to tear the envelope. Still using her hairpin, she slit open one end of the cover and drew out the document.

When she knew the contents, her face expressed unbounded surprise. It had never entered her head that Tom could leave his money to George Wood, of all people in the world.

'What a fool I have been!' she exclaimed under her breath.

Then she began to reflect upon the consequences of what she had done, and, her curiosity being satisfied, her fears began to assume serious proportions. Was it a criminal act that she had committed? She gazed rather helplessly at the torn envelope. It would be impossible to restore it. It would be equally impossible to put the will back into the box, loose and unsealed, without her husband's noticing the fact the next time he had occasion to look into Tom Craik's papers. He would remember very well that he had sealed it and marked it on the outside. The envelope, at least, must disappear at once. She crumpled it into as small a compass as possible and put it into her pocket. It would be very simple to burn it as soon as she was at home. But how to dispose of the will itself was a much harder matter. She dared not destroy that also, for that might turn out to be a deliberate theft,

or fraud, or whatever the law called such deeds. On the other hand, her brother might ask for it at any time, and if it were not in the box it could not be forthcoming, and her husband would get into trouble. It would be easy for Tom to suspect that Sherrington Trimm had destroyed the will, in order that his wife, as next of kin and only heir-at-law, should get the fortune. She thought that, as it was, Tom had shown an extraordinary belief in human nature, though, when she thought of her husband's known honesty, she understood that nobody could mistrust him. He himself would doubtless be the first to discover his loss. What would he do? He would go to Tom and make him execute a duplicate of the will that was lost. Meanwhile, and in case Tom died before Sherrington came back, Totty could put the original in some safe place, where she could cause it to be found if necessary—behind one of those boxes, for instance, or in some corner of the strong-room. Nothing that was locked up between those four walls could ever be lost. If Tom died, she would of course be told that a will had been made and was missing. John Bond would come to her in great distress, and she would come down to the office and help in the search. The scheme did not look very diplomatic, but she was sure that there was nothing else to be done. It was the only way in which she could avoid committing a crime while avoiding also the necessity of confessing to her husband that she had committed an act of supreme folly.

She folded the paper together and looked about the small room for a place in which to hide it. As she was looking she thought she heard John Bond's step again. She had no time to lose, for she would not be able to get rid of him if he entered the strong-room a third time. To leave it on one of the shelves would be foolish, for it might be found at any time. She could see no chink or crack into which to drop it, and John was certainly coming. Totty in her desperation thrust the paper into the bosom of her dress, shut up her own box noisily and went out.

She thought that John Bond looked at her very curiously when she went away, though the impression might well be the result of her own guilty fears. As a matter of fact he was surprised by her extreme pallor, and was on the point of asking if she were ill. But he reflected that the strong-room was a chilly place and that she might be only feeling cold, and he held his tongue.

The paper seemed to burn her, and she longed to be in her own house where she could at least lock it up until she could come to some wise decision in regard to it. She leaned back in

her carriage in an agony of nervous fear. What if John Bond should chance to be the one who made the discovery? He probably knew of the existence of the will, and he very probably had seen it and knew where it was. It was strange that she had not thought of that. If, for instance, it happened that he needed to look at some of her brother's papers that very day, would he not notice the loss and suspect her? After all, he knew as well as any one what she had to gain by destroying the will, if he knew what it contained. How much better it would have been to put it back in its place even without the envelope! How much better anything would be than to feel that she might be found out by John Bond!

She was already far up town, but in her distress she did not recognise her whereabouts, and leaning forward slightly looked through the window. As fate would have it, the only person near the carriage in the street was George Wood, who had recognised it and was trying to get a glimpse of herself. When he saw her, he bowed and smiled, just as he always did. Totty nodded hastily and fell back into her seat. A feeling of sickening despair came over her, and she closed her eyes.

CHAPTER XII.

GEORGE WOOD'S reputation spread rapidly. He had arrested the attention of the public, and the public was both ready and willing to be amused by him. He had finished the second of his books soon after the appearance of the first, and he had found no difficulty in selling the manuscript outright upon his own terms. It was published about the time when the events took place which have been described in the last chapter, and it obtained a wide success. It was, indeed, wholly different from its predecessor in character, and presented a strong contrast to it. The first had been full of action, passionate, strange, unlike the books of the day. The second was the result of much thought and lacked almost altogether the qualities that had given such phenomenal popularity to the first. It was a calm book, almost destitute of plot and of dramatic incidents. It had been polished and adorned to the best of the young writer's ability, he had put into it the most refined of his thoughts, he had filled it with the sayings of characters more than half ideal. He had believed in it while he

was writing it, but he was disappointed with it when it was finished. He had intended to bind together a nosegay of sweet-scented flowers about a central rose, and when he had finished, his nosegay seemed to him artificial, the blossoms looked to him as though they were without stems, tied to dry sticks, and the scent of them had no freshness for his nostrils. Nevertheless he knew that he had given to his work all that he possessed of beauty and refinement in the storehouse of his mind, and he looked upon the venture as final in deciding his future career. It is worse to meet with failure on the publication of a second book, when the first has taken the world by surprise, than it is to fail altogether at the very beginning. Many a polished scholar has produced one good volume; many a refined and spiritual intelligence has painted one lovely scene and dropped the brushes for ever, or taken them up only to blotch and blur incongruous colours upon a spiritless outline, searching with blind eyes for the light that shone but once and can never shine again. Many have shot one arrow in the air and have hit the central mark, whose fingers scarce knew how to hold the bow. The first trial is one of half-reasoned, half-inspired talent; the second shows the artist's hand; the third and all that follow are works done in the competition between master and master, to which neither apprentice nor idle lover of the art can be admitted. He whose first great effort has been successful, and whose second disappoints no one but himself, may safely feel that he has found out his element and knows his own strength. He will, perhaps, turn out only a dull master at his craft as years go on, or he may be but a second-rate artist, but his apprenticeship has been completed, and he will henceforth be judged by the same standard as other artists and masters.

George Wood had followed his own instinct in lavishing so much care and thought and pains upon the book that was now to appear, and his instinct had not deceived him, though when he saw the result he feared that he had made the great false step that is irretrievable. Though many were ready to accept his work on any terms he was pleased to name, yet he held back his manuscript for many weeks, hesitating to give it to the world. The memory of his first enthusiasms blended in his mind with the beauties of tales yet untold, and darkened in his eyes the polish of the present work. Constance admired it exceedingly, saying that, although nothing could ever be to her like the first, this was so different in every way, and yet so good, that no unpleasant

comparisons could be made between the two. Then George took it to Johnson, who kept it a long time and would give no opinion about it until he had read every word it contained.

‘This settles it,’ he said at last.

‘For better or for worse?’ George asked, looking at the pale young man’s earnest face.

‘For better,’ Johnson answered without hesitation. ‘You are a novelist. It is not so wide as a church-door, nor so deep as a well—but it will serve. You will never regret having published it.’

So the book went to the press and in due time appeared, was tasted, criticised, and declared to be good by a majority of judges, was taken up by the public, was discussed, liked, and obtained a large sale. George was congratulated by all his friends in terms of the greatest enthusiasm, and he received so many invitations to dinner as made him feel that either his digestion or his career, or both, must perish in the attempt to cope with them. The dinner-party of to-day, considered as the reward of merit and the expression of good feeling, is no novelty in the history of the world’s society. Little Benjamin was expected to eat twelve times as much as any of his big brothers because Joseph liked him, and the successful man of to-day is often treated with the same kindly though destructive liberality. No one would think it enough to ask him to tea and overwhelm him with the praises of a select circle of fashionable people. He must be made to eat in order that he may understand from the fulness of his own stomach the fulness of his admirer’s heart. To heap good things upon the plate of genius has been in all times considered the most practical way of expressing the public admiration—and in times not long past there was indeed a practical reason for such expression of goodwill, in that genius was liable to be very hungry even after it had been universally acknowledged. The world has more than once bowed down from a respectful distance to the possessor of a glorious intelligence, who in his heart would have preferred a solid portion of bread and cheese to the perishable garlands of flowers scattered at his feet, or to the less corruptible monuments of bronze and stone upon which his countrymen were ready to lavish their gold after he was dead of starvation.

A change has come over the world of late, and it may be that writers themselves have been the cause of it. It is certain that since those who live by the pen have made it their business to amuse rather than to admonish and instruct, their substance has

been singularly increased and their path has been made enviably smooth. Their shadows not only wax and follow the outlines of a pleasant rotundity, but they are cast upon marble pavements, inlaid floors, and Eastern carpets, instead of upon the dingy walls and greasy mud of Grub Street. The star of the public amuser is in the ascendant, and his 'Part of Fortune' is high in the mid-heaven.

It has been said that nothing succeeds like success, and George very soon began to find out the truth of the saying. He was ignorant of the strange possibilities of wealth that were in store for him, and the present was sufficient for all his desires, and far exceeded his former hopes. The days were gone by when he had looked upon his marriage with Constance Fearing as a delicious vision that could never be realised, and to contemplate which, even without hope, seemed to be a dangerous piece of presumption. He had now a future before him, brilliant, perhaps, but assuredly honourable and successful. At his age and with his health and strength, the possibility of his being broken down by overwork or illness did not present itself to him, and if it had he could very well have afforded to disregard it in making his calculations. The world's face showed him one glorious catalogue of hopes, and he felt that he was the man to realise them all.

And now, too, the first of May was approaching again, and he looked forward to receiving a final answer from Constance. Her manner had changed little towards him during the winter, but he thought that little had been for the better. He never doubted now that she was most sincerely attached to him, nor that it depended on anything but her own fancy to give a name to that attachment and call it love. Surely the trial had lasted long enough, surely she must know her own mind now, after so many months of waiting. It was two years since he had first told her that he loved her, a year had passed away since she had admitted that she loved him a little, and now the second year, the one she had asked for as a period of probation, had spent itself likewise, bringing with it for George the first great success of his life, and doubling, trebling his chances of happiness. His growing reputation was a bond between them, of which they had forged every link together. Her praise had stimulated his strength, her delicate and refined taste had often guided the choice of his thoughts, his power of language had found words for what was in the hearts of both. George could no more fancy himself as working without consulting Constance than he could imagine what life would be

without sight or hearing. Her charm was upon him, and penetrated all he did; her beauty was the light by which he saw other women, her voice the music that made harmony of all other sounds. He loved her now, as women have rarely been loved, for love had taken root in his noble and generous nature, as a rare seed in a virgin soul, beautiful from the first and gaining beauty as it grew in strength and fulness of proportion. His heart had never been disturbed before by anything resembling true passion, there were no reminiscences to choke the new growth, no dry and withered stems about which the new love must twine itself until its spreading leaves and clasping tendrils made a rich foliage to cover the dead tree. He, she, the world, love, reputation, were all young together, all young and fresh, and full of the power to grow. To think that the prospect of such happiness should be blighted, the hope of such perfect bliss disappointed was beyond the power of George's imagination.

The time was drawing near when he was to have his answer. He had often done violence to himself of late in abstaining from all question of her love. Earlier in the year he had once or twice returned to his old way of talking with her, but she had seemed displeased, and had put him off, answering that the first of May was time enough, and that she would tell him then. He had no means of knowing what was passing in her mind, for she was almost always the same Constance he had known so long—gentle, sympathising, ready with encouragement, enthusiastic concerning what he did well, suggestive when he was in doubt, thoughtful when his taste did not agree with hers. Looking back upon those long months of intimacy, George knew that she had never bound herself, never uttered a promise of any sort, never directly given him to understand that she would consent to be his wife. And yet her whole life seemed to him to have been one promise since he had known her, and it was treason, in his judgment, to suspect her of insincerity.

In the last days of April he saw less of her than usual, though he could scarcely tell why. More than once, when he had hoped to find her alone, there had been visitors with her, or her sister had been present, and he had not been able to exchange a word with her without being overheard. Indeed, when Grace was established in the room he generally made his visits as short as possible. There was something in the atmosphere of the house, too, that filled him with evil forebodings. Constance often seemed abstracted and preoccupied; there appeared to be a better understanding

between the sisters in regard to himself than formerly, and Grace's manner had changed. In the old days of their acquaintance she had taken little pains to conceal her dislike after she had once made up her mind that George loved her sister, her greeting had been almost haughty, her words had been few and generally ironical, her satisfaction at his departure needlessly apparent. During the last month she had relaxed the severity of her behaviour, instead of treating him more harshly as he had expected and secretly hoped. With the unerring instinct of a man who loves deeply, concerning every one except the object of his love, George had read the signs of the times in the face of his old enemy, and distrusted her increasing benignity. She, at least, had come to the conclusion that Constance would not marry him, and seeing that the necessity for destruction was decreasing, she allowed the sun of her smiles to penetrate the dark storm-clouds of her sullen anger. George would have preferred any convulsion of the elements to this threatened calm.

Constance Fearing was in great distress of mind. She had not forgotten the date, nor had she any intention of letting it pass without fulfilling her engagement and giving George the definite answer he had so patiently expected. The difficulty was, to know what that answer should be. Her indecision could not be ascribed to her indolence in studying the question. It had been constantly before her, demanding immediate solution and tormenting her with its difficulties throughout many long months. Her conscientious love of truth had forced her to examine it much more closely than she would have chosen to do had she yielded to her inclinations. Her own happiness was no doubt vitally concerned, but the consideration of absolute loyalty and honesty must be first and before all things. The tremendous importance of the conclusion now daily more imminent appalled her and frightened her out of her simplicity into the mazes of a vicious logic; and she found the labyrinth of her difficulties further complicated in that its ways were intersected by the by-paths of her religious meditations. When her reason began to grow clear, she suddenly found it opposed to some one of a set of infallible rules by which she had undertaken to guide her whole existence. To-day she prayed to heaven, and grace was given her to marry George. To-morrow she would examine her heart and ascertain that she could never love him as he deserved. Could she marry him when he was to give so much and she had so little to offer? That would be manifestly wrong; but in that case why had her

prayer seemed to be answered so distinctly by an impulse from the heart? She was evidently not in a state of grace, since she was inspired to do what was wrong. Selfishness must be at the bottom of it, and selfishness, as it was the sin about which she knew most, was the one within her comprehension which she the most sincerely abhorred. But if her impulse to marry George was selfish, was it not the direct utterance of her heart, and might this not be the only case in life in which she might frankly follow her own wishes? George loved her most truly. If she felt that she wished to marry him, was it not because she loved him? There was the point, again, confronting her just where she had begun the round of self-torture. Did she love him? What was the test of true love? Would she die for him? Dying for people was theatrical and out of fashion, as she had often been told. It was much more noble to live for those one loved than to die for them. Could she live for George? What did the words mean? Had she not lived for him, said her heart, during the last year, if not longer? What nonsense, exclaimed her reason, as if giving a little encouragement and a great deal of advice could be called living for a man! It meant more than that; it meant so much to her that she felt sure she could never accomplish it. Therefore she did not love him, and it must all come to an end at once.

She reproached herself bitterly for her weakness that had lasted so long. She was a mere flirt, a heartless girl, who had ruined a man's life and happiness recklessly, because she did not know her own mind. She would be brave now, at last, before it was quite too late. She would confess her fault and tell him how despicable she thought herself, how she repented of her evil ways, how she would be his best and firmest friend, his sister, anything that she could be to him, except his wife. He would be hurt, pained, heartbroken for a while, but he would see how much better it had been to speak the truth.

But, in the midst of her passionate self-accusation, the thought of her own state after she should have put him away for ever presented itself with painful distinctness. Whether she loved him or not, he was a part of her life, and she felt that she could not do without him. For one moment she allowed herself to think of his face if she told him that she consented to their union at last; she could see the happy smiles he loved so well and hear the vibrating tones of the voice that moved her more than other voices. Then, to her inexpressible shame, there arose before her visions of another kind, and notably the face of Johnson, the hard-

working critic. All at once George seemed to be surrounded by a host of people whom she did not know, and whom she did not want to know; men whom, as she remembered to have thought before, she would not have wished to see at her table, yet friends of his, faithful friends—Johnson was one at least—to whom he owed much, and whom he would not allow to slip out of his existence because he had married Constance Fearing. She blushed scarlet, though she was alone, and passionate tears of anger at herself burst from her eyes. To think of that miserable consideration, she must be the most contemptible of women. Truly, the baseness of the human heart was unfathomable and shoreless as the ocean of space itself! Truly, she did not love him if she could think such thoughts, and she must tell him so, cost what it might.

The last night came, preceding the day when she had promised to give him her decisive answer. She had written him a word to say that he was expected, and she sat down in her own room to fight the struggle over again for the last time. The morrow was to decide, she thought, and yet it was impossible to come to any conclusion. Why had she not set the period at two years instead of one? Surely, in twelve months more she would have known her own mind, or at least have seen what course to pursue. Step by step she advanced once more into the sea of her difficulties, striving to keep her intelligence free from prejudice, and yet hoping that her heart would speak clearly. But it was of no use, the labyrinth was more confused than ever, the light less, and her strength more unsteady. If she thought, it seemed as though her thoughts would drive her mad; if she prayed, her prayers were confused and senseless.

‘I cannot marry him, I cannot, I cannot!’ she cried at last, utterly worn out with fatigue and anxiety.

She threw herself upon her pillows and tried to rest, while her own words still rang in her ears. She slept a little and she uttered the same cry in her sleep. By force of conscious and unconscious repetition of the phrase, it became mechanised and imposed itself upon her will. When the morning broke she knew that she had resolved not to marry George Wood, and that her resolution was irrevocable.

To tell him so was a very different matter. She grew cold as she thought of the scene that was before her, and became conscious that her nerves were not equal to such a strain. She fancied that the decision she had reached had been the result of her strength in

her struggle with herself. In reality she had succumbed to her own weakness and had abandoned the contest, feeling that it was easier to do anything negative rather than to commit herself to a bondage from which she might some day wish to escape when it should be too late. With a little more firmness of character she would have been able to shake off her doubts and to see that she really loved George very sincerely, and that to hesitate was to sacrifice everything to a morbid fear of offending her now over-delicate conscience. Even now, if she could have known herself, she would have realised that she had by no means given up all love for the man who loved her, nor all expectation of ultimately becoming his wife. She would have behaved very differently if she had been sure that she was burning her ships and cutting off all possibility of a return, or if she had known the character of the man with whom she had to deal. She had passed through a sort of nervous crisis, and her resolution was in the main a concession to her desire to gain time. In making it she had thrown down her arms and given up the fight. The reaction that followed made it seem impossible for her to face such a scene as must ensue.

At first it struck her that the best way of getting out of the difficulty would be to write to George and tell him her decision in as few words as possible, begging him to come and see her a week later, when she would do her best to explain to him the many and good reasons which had contributed to the present result. This idea, however, she soon abandoned. It would seem most unkind to deal such a blow so suddenly and then expect him to wait so long before enlightening him further upon the subject. Face him herself she could not. She might be weak, she thought, and she was willing to admit it; it was only to add another unworthiness to the long list with which she was ready to accuse herself. She could not, and she would not, tell George herself. The only person who could undertake to bear her message was

She felt very kindly disposed to Grace that morning. There was a satisfaction in feeling that she could think of any one without the necessity of considering the question of her marriage. Besides, Grace had opposed her increasing liking for George from the beginning, and had warned her that she would never marry him. Grace had been quite right, and, as Constance was feeling particularly humble just then, she thought it would be agreeable to her pride if she confessed the superiority of Grace's judgment. She could accuse herself before her sister of all her misdeeds

without the fear of witnessing George's violent grief. Moreover, it would be better for George, too, since he would be obliged to contain himself when speaking to her sister, as he would certainly not control his feelings in an interview with herself. To be short, Constance was willing in that moment to be called a coward, rather than face the man she had wronged. Her courage had failed her altogether, and she was being carried rapidly down stream from one concession to another, while still trying to give an air of rectitude and self-sacrifice to all her actions. She was preparing an abyss of well-merited self-contempt for herself in the future, though her present satisfaction in her release from responsibility had dulled her real sense of right, and had left only the artificialities of her morbid conscience still sensitive to the flattery of imaginary self-sacrifice.

An hour later she was alone with her sister. She had greeted her in an unusually affectionate way on entering the room, and the younger girl immediately felt that something had taken place. She herself was smiling, and cordial in her manner.

'Grace, dearest,' Constance began, after some little hesitation, 'I want to tell you. You have talked so much about Mr. Wood—you know, you have always been afraid that I would marry him, have you not?'

'Not lately,' answered Grace with a pleasant smile.

'Well—do you know? I have thought very seriously of it, and I had decided to give him a definite answer to-day. Do you understand? I have treated him abominably, Grace—oh, I am so sorry! I wish it could all be undone—you were so right!'

'It is not too late,' observed Grace. Then, seeing that there were tears in her sister's eyes, she drew nearer to her, and put her arm round her waist in a comforting way. 'Do not be so unhappy, Conny,' she said, in a tone of deep sympathy. 'Men do not break their hearts nowadays——'

'Oh, but he will, Grace! I am sure he will—and the worst of it is that I must—you know——'

'Not at all, dear. If you like I will break it to him——'

'Oh, Grace, what a darling you are!' cried Constance, throwing both her arms round her sister's neck and kissing her. 'I did not dare to ask you, and I could not, I could not have done it myself! But you will do it very kindly, will you not? You know he has been so good and patient.'

There was an odd smile on Grace's strong face when she

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answered, but Constance was not in a mood to notice anything disagreeable just then.

'I will break it to him very gently,' said the young girl quietly. 'Of course you must tell me what I am to say, more or less—an idea, you know. I cannot say bluntly that you have sent word that you have decided not to marry him, can I?'

'Oh no!' exclaimed Constance, suddenly growing very grave. 'You must tell him that I feel towards him just as I always did——'

'Is that true?'

'Of course. I always told him that I did not love him enough to marry him. You may as well know it all. A year ago, he proposed again—well, yes, it was not the first time. I told him that if on the first of May—this first of May—I loved him better than I did then, I would marry him. Well, I have thought about it, again and again, all the time, and I am sure I do not love him as I ought, if I were to marry him.'

'I should think not,' laughed Grace, 'if it is so hard to find it out!'

'Oh, you must not laugh at me,' said Constance earnestly. 'It is very, very serious. Have I done right, Grace? I wish I knew! I have treated him so cruelly, so hatefully, and yet I did not mean to. I am so fond of him, I admire him so much, I like his ways—and all—I do still, you know. It is quite true. I suppose I ought to be ashamed of it—only, I am sure I never did love him, really.'

'I have no idea of laughing at the affair,' answered Grace. 'It is serious enough, I am sure, especially for him.'

'Yes—I want to make a confession to you. I want to tell you that you were quite right, that I have encouraged him and led him on, and been dreadfully unkind. I am sure you think I am a mere flirt, and perfectly heartless! Is it not true? Well, I am, and it is of no use to deny it. I will never, never, do such a thing again—never! But, after all, I do like him very much. I never could understand why you hated him so, from the first.'

'I did not hate him. I do not hate him now,' said Grace emphatically. 'I did hate the idea of his marrying you, and I do still. I thought it was just as well that he should see that from the way one member of the family behaved towards him.'

'He did see it!' exclaimed Constance, in a tone of regret. 'It is another of the things I inflicted on him.'

'You? I should rather think it was I——'

‘No, it was all my fault, all, everything, from beginning to end—and you are a darling, Gracey dear, and it is so sweet of you! You will be very good to him? Yes—and if he should want to see me very much, after you have told him everything, I might come down for a minute. I should so much like to be sure that he has taken it kindly.’

‘If you wish it, you might see him, but I hardly think—well, do as you think best, dear.’

‘Thank you, darling—you know you really are a darling, though I do not always tell you so. And now, I think I will go and lie down. I never slept last night.’

‘Silly child!’ laughed Grace, kissing her on both cheeks. ‘As though it mattered so much, after all.’

‘Oh, but it does matter,’ Constance said regretfully, as she left the room.

When Grace Fearing was alone she went to the window and looked out thoughtfully into the fresh morning air.

‘I am very glad,’ she said aloud to herself. ‘I am very, very glad. But I would not have done it. No, not for worlds! I would rather have cut off my right hand than treat a man like that!’

In that moment she pitied George Wood with all her heart.

(*To be continued.*)

The Ballad of Sir Hugh.

THE castle had been held in siege
While thrice three weeks went past
And still the foe no 'vantage gained,
And still our men stood fast.

We held the castle for our King
Against our foes and his ;
Stout was our heart, as man's must be
In such brave cause as this.

Sir Hugh he walked his castle wall,
And oh ! his heart was sore,
For the foe held fast the only son
His dead wife ever bore.

The castle gates were firm and fast,
Strong was the castle wall,
Yet bore Sir Hugh an aching heart
For the thing that might befall.

He looked out to the pearly east
Ere day began to break ;
' God save my boy till evensong,'
He said, ' for Mary's sake !'

He looked out on the western sky
When the sun sank, blood-red ;
' God keep the child till morning light,
For Christ his sake,' he said.

And morn and eve and noon and night
His heart one prayer did make :
' God keep my boy, my little son,
For his dear dead mother's sake !'

At last, worn out with bootless siege,
Our walls being tall and stout,
The rebel captain neared our gates
With a flag of truce held out.

‘A word, Sir Hugh, a word with you
Ere yet it be too late.
We have a prisoner, and would know
What is to be his fate.

‘Yield up the castle or he dies !
’Tis thus the bargain stands :
His body in our hands we hold,
His life is in your hands !’

Sir Hugh looked down, across the moat,
And in the sunlight fair
He saw the child’s blue frightened eyes
And tangled golden hair.

He saw the little arms held out,
The little voice rang thin :
‘O father dear, undo the gates !
O father, let me in !’

Sir Hugh leaned on the battlement,
His voice rang strong and true :
‘My son, I cannot let thee in
As my heart bids me do ;

‘For honour and our King command,
And we must needs obey ;
So bear thee as a brave man’s son,
As I will do this day.

‘If I should open and let thee in,
I let in, with thee, shame ;
And that thing never shall be done
By one who bears our name !’

The boy looked up, his shoulders squared,
Threw back his bright blond hair :
‘Father, I will not be the one
To shame the name we bear !

THE BALLAD OF SIR HUGH.

'And whatsoever they may do,
Whether I live or die,
I'll bear me as a brave man's son,
For that, thank God, am I !'

'Then spake Sir Hugh unto the foe—
He spake full fierce and free :
'Ye cowards, think ye ye have affair
With cowards, such as ye be ?

'What ? I must yield my castle up,
For fear my son be slain ?
I trow ye never had to do
Till now, with honest men !

' 'Tis but by traitors such as you
That such base deeds be done.
Not to betray his King and cause
Did I beget my son !

'My son was bred that he might fight,
And hew down knaves like you ;
Or—at the least—die like a man,
As he this day will do !

'And, since ye lack a weapon meet
To take so good a life—
For your coward steel would stain his blood—
Here, take his father's knife !'

With that he flung his long knife down
From off the castle wall ;
It glimmered and gleamed in the brave sunlight,
Full in the sight of all.

Sir Hugh passed down the turret-stair---
We held our breath in awe. . . .
May my tongue wither, ere it tell
The damned work we saw !

.
.

When all was done, a shout went up
From that accursèd crew,
And from the chapel's silence dim
Came forth in haste Sir Hugh.

'Now what may mean this clamour and din?'
'Thy son, Sir Hugh, is dead!'
'I deemed the foe had entered in,
But God is good!' he said.

We stood upon the topmost tower
Full in the setting sun;
Shamed silence grew in the traitors' camp
Now that foul deed was done.

See! on the hills the gleam of steel,
Hark! threatening clarions ring!
See! horse and foot and spear and shield
And the banner of the King!

And in the camp of those without
Hot tumult and cold fear—
For the traitor only dares be brave
Until his King be near!

We armed at speed and sallied forth.
Sir Hugh was at our head;
He set his teeth, and he marked his path
By a line of traitors, dead.

He hacked his way straight to the churl
Who did the boy to death;
He swung his sword in his two strong hands,
And clove him to the teeth.

And while his steel was held there fast,
The caitiffs round him pressed,
And he died, as one of his line should die,
With three blades in his breast.

And when they told the King these things
He turned his head away,
And said, 'A braver man than I
Has fallen for me this day!'

At the Sign of the Ship.

CRITICS AND CRITICISED.

NOVELISTS are still complaining, in the decent obscurity of the *Author*, that they are not well treated by reviewers. Mr. Lewis Morris, also, in *Murray's Magazine*, talks of critics, or of some critics, in a dissatisfied tone. They are :

'A mischievous crew, who, whenever a book of verse appears, are always ready to crush it with vulgar insults or unmerited neglect, and for the most part succeed.' Mr. Morris's own poems, assuredly, have not been crushed—far from it—so this is no mere personal wail. Again, critics, or rather some critics, are 'second-hand superior persons from Grub Street or Wall Street' (in New York City, but why?) 'with a nodding acquaintance with the Latin Grammar.' Also, the poet has to endure 'the grotesque ill-will of foul-mouthed Thersites, and Tom Fool belabouring his betters' with his professional weapon. Yet again we hear of 'latter-day critics larding their ill-nature with scraps of booksellers' French, stale and yet raw.' That which is stale will serve but poorly as lard, and what is 'booksellers' French?' Is it to be found in catalogues, is it *veau fauve, non rogné, épuisé, mar. rouge*, terms in booksellers' French which it would be difficult to lard ill-nature with? These are mysteries, but clearly Mr. Morris is ill content. The novelists mainly regret that they are noticed in batches of six or eight, while essays and histories often get a separate review. But novelists, who, by the way, do not always grumble in grammar, should remember that they are very numerous. Each week does not produce eight histories, or even eight volumes of essays, but eight novels are a not unusual harvest, perhaps sixteen new novels to the week is the common average. Of the yearly eight hundred, perhaps ten are really excellent. Were I an editor (*unberufen*!), methinks I would give the good novels a separate article, and even, perhaps, extend the privilege of an exclusive pillory to very bad novels by very

well-known hands. Whether this would make the well-known but erring hands happier is another question. But novelists must remember that, if only one column apiece were given to each novel, the whole paper would not contain what must be written on a topic of the scantiest public interest.

* * *

As a being who has been a good deal reviewed, I must confess that I generally think I know a good deal more of my own topic than the critics know. Moreover, I do not believe that they have ever quite shown such a good opinion of my deathless works as I myself entertain. Dr. Johnson only once had what he called his bellyful of wall fruit, and I do not know that I ever had my whack of praise. And, even if I got it, I would think the reviewer an indiscriminate person. Frankly, I cannot conceive such a thing as a review really satisfactory to an author. We should remember this, and be lenient to reviewers when they are kindly. When they are not kindly, one feels like the French gentleman who cheated at cards. 'It is true I cheat, but I do not love to be told it,' said this philosopher. Nor does one love to be told that one is careless, or feeble, or tedious, or flippant, or vulgar, though, goodness knows, it may all be true enough. So really to be satisfied with one's critics is not in nature.

* * *

Mr. Lewis Morris, very genially to be sure, and without naming names, finds that some writers of verse are prolix; that others (like my Lord Tennyson) have selected provincial subjects, or, like Milton, subjects devoid of human interest. But in Milton's time salvation was really thought a matter of very considerable moment, and Creation interested him as much as Evolution can interest anybody now. Then Mr. Lewis Morris holds that some modern poets who write dramas after the Greek model are pedantic, that others are prolix, and others, as Mr. Browning and Mr. Rossetti, are obscure, while others dally with *ballades* and *triolets*. *Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!* But I never thought it was poetry, and I won't do it again. Thus, perhaps, if we venture to put names to the modern offenders, we find—let us have a tabular form—that modern poets may be arranged thus:—

Lord TENNYSON.	.	.	Provincial in subject.
Mr. SWINBURNE	}	.	? Pedantic.
Mr. BRIDGES		.	
Mr. WILLIAM MORRIS.	.	.	Prolix.

Mr. ROSSETTI	}	.	.	Obscure.
Mr. BROWNING				
TOM	}	.	.	Frivolous.
DICK				
HARRY				
		.	.	Frenchified.

Possibly the names are not always correctly supplied: that is the worst of the allusive style, where you write *at* people. No doubt Mr. Lewis Morris also recognises the merits of some of the authors criticised, however it may fare with Thomas, Richard, and Henry. As to Lord Tennyson, I, for one, cannot regard the Arthurian legends as 'provincial.' If one had to address any reproach to the Laureate, it would be in the words of Virgil to Horace, in the *Dialogues des Morts*, by Messire François de Salignac de la Motte-Fénelon, 'il y a des choses que je croirois un peu trop tournées.' But perhaps this is 'a scrap of booksellers' French, stale yet raw.' Concerning such plays as *Erechtheus*, are we to call them pedantic? That is for every man's own taste to decide. That Mr. Rossetti is not always very clear, that Mr. Browning is not constantly lucid, we may agree, and there is a good deal of Mr. William Morris. As for Henry, Richard, and Thomas, *autant en emporte le vent!* But, surely, here be criticisms by Mr. Lewis Morris not absolutely laudatory. Shall we, then, call him by the names which he freely confers on other critics? Assuredly not: he has his own idea of how poetry should be written, he does not approve wholly of the other gentlemen, and candidly says so. But then we have all a right to do as much, and putting Mr. Lewis Morris, as a minstrel, in a class by himself, let us leave the public to affix its own epithets.

Mr. LEWIS MORRIS. . . .

No one will call him obscure, or pedantic, very much less will they reproach this author with frivolity. But it is certain that human beings, however great their merits, must have some defect, and certain that they do not love to hear of it. The Roman general, in his triumph, must have detested the slave who whispered, 'Thou art mortal,' and critics, who inherit the duty of the slave, must expect to be unpopular. Ah, Thersites and Margites, if one only knew your real names and addresses, how one would pay you out! But you are safe, envious slanderers, in your anonymous lurking-places; and, besides, there is always the risk of rushing out and revenging oneself on the wrong lady or gentleman.

THE COMPLETE BUNGLER.

SCENE I.

HAMPSHIRE.

PISCATOR ANGLUS. (*Fin de Siècle.*) PISCATOR SCOTUS.

Scotus.—Well, now let's go to your sport of angling. Where, Master, is your river?

Anglus.—Marry, 'tis here; mark you, this is the famous Test.

Scotus.—What, Master, this dry ditch? There be scarce three inches of water in it.

Anglus.—Patience, Scholar, the water is in the meadows, or Master Oakley, the miller, is holding it up. Nay, let us wait here some hour or so till the water is turned on. Or perchance, Scholar, for the matter of five shillings, Master Oakley will even raise his hatches, an you have a crown about you.

Scotus.—I like not to part with my substance, but, as needs must, here, Master, is the coin you hint at.

[*Exit ANGLUS to the Mill. He returns.*]

Anglus.—Now, Scholar, said I not so? The water is turned on again, and, lo you, at the tail of yonder stream, a fair trout is rising. You shall see a touch of our craft.

[*ANGLUS crawls on his belly into a tuft of nettles, where he kneels and flicks his fly for about ten minutes.*]

Anglus.—Alas, he has ceased rising, and I am grievously entangled in these nettles. Come, Scholar, but warily, lest ye fright my fish, and now disentangle my hook.

Scotus.—Here is your hook, but, marry, my fingers tingle shrewdly with the nettles; also I marked the fish hasting up stream.

Anglus.—Nay, come, we shall even look for another.

Scotus.—Oh, Master, what is this? That which but now was dry ditch is presently salad bowl! Mark you how the green vegetables cover the waters! We shall have no sport.

Anglus.—Patience, Scholar; 'tis but Master Hedgely's men, cutting the weeds above. We may rest us some hour or two, till they go by. Or, perchance, for a matter of five shillings—

Scotus.—Nay, Master, this English angling is over costly. The rent of your ditch is high, the expenses of travel are ruinous.

In crawling through your nettles and thistles I have scratched my face, and torn my raiment, and I may not pay the labourer to cease labouring in his industry.

Anglus.—Why then, *pazienza*, Scholar, or listen while I sing that sweet ditty of country contentment and an angler's life, writ by worthy Master Hackle long ago.

SONG.

The Angler hath a jolly life
 Who by the rail runs down,
 And leaves his business and his wife,
 And all the din of town.
 The wind down stream is blowing straight,
 And nowhere cast can he ;
 Then lo, he doth but sit and wait
 In kindly company.

Or else they turn the water off,
 Or folk be cutting weed,
 While he doth at misfortune scoff,
 From every trouble freed.
 Or else he waiteth for a rise,
 And ne'er a rise may see ;
 For why, there are not any flies
 To bear him company

Or, if he mark a rising trout,
 He straightway is caught up,
 And then he takes his flasket out,
 And drinks a rousing cup.
 Or if a trout he chance to hook,
 Weeded and broke is he,
 And then he finds a godly book
 Instructive company.

What think you of my song, Scholar? 'Tis choicely musical. What, he is gone! A pest on those Northerners; they have no manners. Now, methinks I do remember a trout called George, a heavy fellow that lies ever under the arch of yonder bridge, where there is shelter from the wind. Ho for George!

[*Exit singing.*]

SCENE II.

A BRIDGE.

Enter ANGLUS.

Anglus.—Now to creep like your Indian of Virginia on the prey, and angle for George. I'faith, he is a lusty trout; many a good Wickham have I lost in George.

[He ensconces himself in the middle of a thorn bush.]

Anglus.—There he is, I mark his big back fin. Now speed me, St. Peter, patron of all honest anglers! But first, to dry my fly!

[He flicks his fly for ten minutes. Enter BOY on Bridge. ANGLUS makes his cast, too short. BOY heaves a great stone from the Bridge. Exit GEORGE. Exit BOY.]

Anglus.—Oh, Mass! verily the angler hath need of patience! That boy hath spoiled my sport, and were it not that swearing frights the fish, I could find it in my heart to say an oath or twain. But, ha, here come the swallows, hawking low on the stream. Now, were but my Scholar here, I could impart to him much honest lore concerning the swallow, and other birds. But where she hawks, there fly must be, and fish will rise, and, look you, I do mark the trout feeding in yonder ford below the plank bridge.

[ANGLUS steals off, and gingerly takes up his position.]

Anglus.—Marry, that is a good trout under the burdock!

[He is caught up in the burdock, and breaks his tackle.]

Anglus.—Now to knot a fresh cast. Marry, but they are feeding gaily! How kindly is the angler's life; he harmeth no fish that swims, yet the *Spectator* deemeth ours a cruel sport. Ah, good Master Townsend and learned Master Hutton, little ye wot of our country contents. So, I am ready again, and this Whitchurch dun will beguile yonder fish, I doubt not. Marry, how thick the flies come, and how the fish do revel in this merciful provender that Heaven sendeth! Verily I know not at which of these great fellows to make my essay.

[Enter thirty-four callow young ducks, swimming up stream. The ducks chevy the flies, taking them out of the very mouths of the trout.]

Anglus.—Oh, mercy. I have hooked a young duck! Where is my landing-net? Nay, I have left it under yonder elm!

[*He struggles with the young duck. By the conclusion of the fray the Rise is over.*]

Anglus.—I have saved my fly, but lo, the trout have ceased to feed, and will rise no more till after sunset. Well, 'a merry heart goes all the way!' And lo, here comes my Scholar. Ho, runaway, how have you sped?

Scotus.—Not ill. Here be my spoils, great ones; but how faint-hearted are your southern trout!

Anglus.—That fat fellow is a good three pounds by the scales. But, Scholar, with what fly caught ye these, and where?

Scotus.—Marry, Master, in a Mill-tail, where the water lagged not, but ran free; nor with no fly, but with an artificial penk, or minnow. It was made by a handsome woman that had a fine hand, and wrought for Master Brown, of Aberdeen. The mould, or body of the minnow, is of parchment, methinks, and he hath fins of copper, all so curiously dissembled that it will beguile any sharp-sighted trout in a swift stream. Men call it a Phantom, Master; wilt thou not try my Phantom?

Anglus.—Begone, sirrah. I took thee for an angler, and thou art but a poaching knave!

Scotus.—Knave thyself! I will break thy head!

Anglus.—Softly, Scholar. Here comes good Master Hedgely, who will see fair play. Now lie there, my coat, and have at you!

[*They fight. Scotus is knocked down.*]

Anglus.—Half-minute time! Time is up! Master Hedgely, in my dry fly box thou wilt find a little sponge for moistening of my casting lines. Wilt thou, of thy courtesy, throw it up for my Scholar? And now, Scholar, trust me, thy guard is too low. I hope thou bearest no malice.

Scotus.—None, Master. But, lo! I am an hungered; wilt thou taste my cates? Here I have bread slices and marmalade of Dundee. This fishing is marvellous hungry work.

Anglus.—Gladly will I fall to, but first say me a grace—*Benedictus benedicat!* Where is thine usquebaugh? Marry, 'tis the right Talisker!

Scotus.—And now, Master, wherefore wert thou wroth with me? Came we not forth to catch fish?

Anglus.—Nay, marry, Scholar, but to fish with the dry fly.

Now this, humanly speaking, is impossible; natheless it is rare sport. But for your fish, as they were ill come by, let us even give them to good Master Hedgely here, and so be merry till the sedges come on in the late twilight. And, trust me, this is the rarest fishing, and the peacefulest; only see that thou fish not with the wet fly, for that is Anathema. So shall we have light consciences.

Scotus.—And light baskets!

Anglus.—Ay, it may be so.

* * *

If ever there was a work of art which exactly 'filled the bill' it is Mr. Grant Allen's *What's Bred in the Bone*.¹ This narrative obtained the prize of 1,000*l.*, offered by the spirited proprietor of *Tit-Bits*, and it richly deserved that guerdon. Mr. Grant Allen has proved that he can be the Montépin of English romance, as, no doubt, he could be the Bourget, or the Ohnet, or the Gyp, or the Howells, if he chose. *What's Bred in the Bone* is what you can recommend to a friend, to a friend who, like Mr. Thackeray, likes his novels hot and strong, which is my own taste. Having come down to the country expressly to read the *Meletemata* of the learned Nitzsch, I unwarily purchased *What's Bred, &c.* What's Nitzsch, I ask, compared to such a rival? Here is everything that fiction (for *Tit-Bits*) should have. It was a pity to waste the villain so early, but, even when throttled, he did a great deal of mischief. Then the Q.C.! What one likes (to quote M. de Montépin) is his *nature primesautière*. In the spring a Q.C.'s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of crime. There is an inconvenient entry in a parish register, and he means to cut it out (p. 204). It is usually Baronets who do this, not knowing that copies are kept—at the Registry Office, I think. A Q.C. would have known, but not a reader of *Tit-Bits*. Then, when he has committed an accidental homicide, what would a Q.C. do? Give himself up to justice? Not at all; hide the body in a dell, on the other hand, in accordance with the best authorities. Even the printer has had a lucky stroke; he talks of a man's 'stentorious breathing.' The voice of Stentor was loud; about his breathing we know little. But these are trifles. This is an excellent novel. The hereditary snake dance with the boa (not constrictor) is perfectly delightful and original. The Twins, more or less Corsican, are admirable. Then the villain is

¹ *Tit-Bits* Office.

not a minor poet, as usual, but a musician, which is really more probable; and it is high time that the minor poets had a holiday, or were even promoted to the rank of hero. To judge by the language of some haughty critics, one might think that to write a novel of this kind is an easy thing, which any one can do. But it is, perhaps, as rare a gift as the composition of the most 'cultured' fiction. The first thing is to *empoigner*, to grip your public, and that is the chief and greatest difficulty. No mere accumulation of crimes will do it; the special narrative genius is wanted, that which holds the student as the Ancient Mariner held the Wedding Guest, with his glittering eye. Criticism should cry in the streets that this is the one thing needful, not analysis, nor culture, nor epigram, nor this, nor that, which is all very well, but only comes into play when the attention is caught, as Mr. Allen catches it, now, as often previously.

ANDREW LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following amounts. Contributions received after July 11 will be entered in the September number:—

Miss E. Smith, a parcel of socks, &c. Collected by J. D. (Kensington), 5s. Received at St. Katharine's Restaurant, 42A Dock Street, E., during June: Very nice clothing (anonymous); Men's clothes, mended, from Mrs. G. M. L.; Flannel shirts and a suit, from Mr. Townend; Very nice box of clothes, from Mrs. Duret; Men's boots, from A. Bevington.

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WHAT IS LIFE?

'Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player, That struts and frets his hour upon the stage, And then is heard no more.'

But we must be content to believe in the future shore. Shall we SAIL or DRIFT?

NOBILITY OF LIFE.



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AND DUTY.**

'Come the corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them; nought shall make us rue,
IF ENGLAND TO HERSELF DO REST BUT TRUE.'

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'A DEVONSHIRE LADY.—Jan. 26, 1889.'

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1891.

The Mischief of Monica.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE HEART-WHOLE WOMAN.

Who hath talked of weeping? Yet
There is something at my heart
Gnawing, I would fain forget;
And an aching, and a smart.—C. G. ROSSETTI.

MONICA'S insinuation in regard to young Rowland was made just as the sisters were re-entering their own domain, after their successful call in Queen's Gate.

It was not, as we know, well received by Bell.

'I am sure he never thought of *that*,' she cried, as soon as wrath and confusion would let her speak. 'And I am sure I did not, and never should. It is too bad of you, Monica, to put such an idea into one's head. I was only thinking of him as a—as a host, as someone to be talked to, who was busy looking after us, and very kind, and pleasant, and amusing—he really was very amusing; but if you think I asked you afterwards about his being considered good-looking, because—because—oh! I am very angry with you, Monica! I am indeed, Monica!'

'I am most dreadfully penitent, Bell.'

'You are laughing at me again now.'

'Laughing? Oh, no: not laughing. Not laughing *much*. Or if I am, what's in a laugh any more than in a rose? Seriously,

my dear, this is no laughing matter. When I saw you and Mr. Rowland in such very close conversation together, and so very well pleased with each other, I was not at all inclined to laugh. I said to my wise self, "This will never do. My good sister is not to play the fool as I have played it," and I meant to give a little piece of admonition on the subject. But anon I take note of your friend—I observe he pays me no attention—(you had your day in regard to that complaint, Bell; it is my day now)—and I think my own thoughts. When my dear sister asks so sweetly and seriously, with such a heavenly innocence in her accents, for my opinion of Mr. Beauty Rowland's looks, I think them still more. On the whole they are pleasant thoughts. I might go on with the series under very little encouragement.'

But Isabel was not to be won. She had been so genuinely unconscious, so absolutely straightforward in her simplicity, that it did seem as if she should not have been the victim of mirth and slyness.

Bell was slower of temperament than her sister. Monica's blood galloped in her veins; Bell's stole along. When a new idea came to Monica, it burst in upon her, carrying all before it; the same would be admitted cautiously and reluctantly into Bell's mind.

Monica was now all alive to another aspect of life than any which had ever before been presented to her. Bell was not so sure about this aspect.

Her timid nature clung to old traditions. Her more sluggish imagination had never at any time busied itself with speculative theories and deductions; so that long after the quicker and more reflective elder had learned to despise and suspect, the younger was still being guided by Colonel Lavenham's maxims.

Thus in the revolution of ideas which had travelled swiftly over the spirit of the former, the latter had had but a very minor share. She had been borne along by Monica's side on the breast of the strong current which swept across her sister's soul. She had agreed to all Monica said because it was Monica who spoke; but with it all, in secret she still held to a few dogged reservations with a tenacity which did credit to her fibre.

One of these reservations was in regard to old friends and new. Bell would be obstinately silent when Monica railed against the world which had, if we may so speak, borne and bred them. It made her uneasy, even though she had no defence to offer; and as her former life had suited her easy nature better in all respects

than it had accommodated itself to the higher spirit of her sister, it can hardly be wondered at that she should still look back upon it with longings and regrets. She was also a full year younger than Monica, though that perhaps did not greatly signify. The pair had made their *début* together, the Lavenhams having been impatient of the success which was expected to attend the production of the beautiful orphans, and reluctant to wait till Isabel was arrived at the accredited age.

It will thus be understood that, although at nineteen years old the younger Miss Lavenham was in some respects a woman of the world, with twenty-fold the experience of many a mature matron, she still beheld it fresh, sparkling, inviting; was still unwilling to believe that it could ever be anything else.

Partly from the tender consideration for a weaker creature incident to one possessed of infinite force of character, and partly from a desire to shut her own eyes and see only what she chose to see, Monica had kept to herself much of the knowledge which her strange life brought, and it was only during the past few weeks that Isabel had come to perceive how differently the two must always have felt. Monica had at once loved and hated, clung to and repulsed, feared and scorned the world she lived in. While firmly implanted, as she believed, in its midst, she had scoffed at it and made light of it; subsequently, in the uprooting and demolition which had followed, it had obtained in her eyes a fictitious value and endearment; finally, she was by one rapid transition and another fast throwing it off altogether.

This will serve to explain to my readers Monica Lavenham's attitude towards the young man whom she thought, and not unwarrantably, had been attracted by her sister. 'Why not?' she inquired of herself. 'He is a gentleman; not a fine gentleman, not a smart man,—but a gentleman all the same. She would never be ashamed of him,—he would never give her any occasion to be ashamed of him. Then he is rich, and could offer a comfortable home. Lastly, he has a devoted sister, who on the slightest encouragement is ready to break out in songs of praise loud enough to fill the dome of St. Paul's. He must be a good fellow, I should say—a good, steady, work-a-day husband, who would suit Bell down to the ground. No trouble—no temper—no anything. As for his beauty—oh! dear me, yes,—anything she likes to call it. He has an immaculate nose, irreproachable eyes and mouth, and a superb head of hair. N.B.—He ought to have it cut. I will cry ditto to every other commendation, but if she says his hair is not

too long, I will make a stand. It is very pretty hair, pretty and well brushed,—but he must go to the hairdresser if he is to become my brother-in-law. The shorter a man's hair is kept,' continued this excellent authority, with decision, 'the better; especially when it waves'; and on a sudden her eyes took a far-away look, a little smile crept over her lips, and she woke up presently with a sigh, to wish she had not been thinking again of Harry Dorrien.'

Bell, however, hardly got on so fast. The Rowlands were still to her only the Rowlands. The house in Queen's Gate only the *pis aller* to which their weary steps and sinking hearts had turned when Belgrave Square and Eaton Square drove them unrelentingly away. And though she had enjoyed herself within the fire-lit oasis, and found an amusing companion in her host, she was astonished to find that Monica should, to use a homely phrase, 'even' her to the level which Monica's words indicated. Practical Monica was somewhat taken aback by this view of the subject.

'It is sheer nonsense, however'—she pursued the above ruminations impetuously. 'I must set myself to work off all such littleness. It is not pride,—I could understand pride,—but Bell never was proud,—she has no right to begin being proud,—and besides, she is *not* proud,' emphatically and illogically. 'She is just a goose,' continued the elder sister, with a sister's impartial frankness. 'And if there is anything in it, I must not allow her to be a goose. I am sure I only wish there were something in it. I only hope there may be. Queen's Gate?—why not Queen's Gate? Bell might be as happy in Queen's Gate as anywhere else. I am sure Aunt Fanny used to visit there, though it happened that we forgot if she did. She must have visited there—of course she visited there. And what in the name of common sense does it matter whether she did or not? It is perfectly ridiculous—it is idiotic to think so much about such things. I always felt it was so; though I talked like the rest, and was as silly as anybody. Six months ago I should have said, "Where is Queen's Gate?" with quite as good an air as Bell did the other day, though I should have known perfectly, even to a square inch, the head and the tail of it. It is a very nice part too—nice and open—and the houses are magnificent. If Bell can think Ernest Rowland a handsome man, she may very well think his home a handsome house. And if she does not think it'—a pause—'she has just *got* to think it,' concluded Miss Lavenham, with the authority of a commander-in-chief disposing of a drummer boy.

Accordingly, 'I did not know Mr. Rowland belonged to the "Junior Carlton,"' observed she one day, when the two came in to find a certain card on their table. 'The "Junior Carlton,"' proceeded Monica, taking it up, and eyeing the superscription.

'I don't see that *that* is anything,' rejoined her sister, who was still somewhat tart upon the subject. 'Anyone may belong to a club, I suppose.'

'Then you suppose very wrongly, my dear. To belong to a good club—to so good a club as the "Junior Carlton"—argues a certain status; that is to say, it is always thought something of, especially among men. The "Junior Carlton"——' she paused.

'I suppose Mr. Dorrien belongs to it,' quoth Bell, a little maliciously.

'Yes, he does'—Monica affected to perceive nothing—'he does, and what I was wondering was, can it have been he who put Mr. Rowland up for it? I know they are friends.'

'Oh! Monica, *friends!*'

'I tell you they *are* friends,' with some asperity. 'I knew that long ago. Everyone likes the Rowlands, and Lady Dorrien herself told me that she did not know how it was she had never called upon them. I remember her very words were, "Harry is such friends with the eldest son."'

'So that is why you have taken him up so warmly?'

'Absurd!' But Monica coloured. 'As if Mr. Rowland needed to be "taken up" by me or by anyone,' she continued briskly. 'If you don't like him, *don't* like him, and see no more of him,—but for goodness' sake let us have the truth about it. Nobody wants to force your inclinations, as it is called; but if you begin to pretend that he is not good enough for you, and all that kind of silly, foolish, school-girlish rubbish,' tone and emphasis rising with every word, 'you will make a perfect laughing-stock of yourself, and you will meet with no sympathy from *me*.'

'I never said he was not good enough—I never said such a word, Monica.'

'You meant it, and you looked it. You turned down the corners of your prim mouth at his card——'

'—Only because you made such a fuss about it.'

'I made no fuss about it. I said that I did not know that Mr. Rowland belonged to the "Junior Carlton," and neither I did. You were on the look-out for a chance of being disagreeable, and so you snapped at me. You would not have said what you did about—other people, if you had not meant to be disagreeable.'

‘What other people?’

But Monica marched out of the room.

She was not so angry, however, but that she smiled to herself as soon as she was on the stairs. ‘She is left standing with his card in her hand,’ she nodded. ‘Oh, my dear Bell, I don’t fancy you will ask, “Where is Queen’s Gate?” another time.’

On the next occasion when Mr. Rowland called, the young ladies were at home.

It was a raw, foggy, miserable day, and the lamps were flaring in the little street outside. Within, the house was only half-lit—not sufficiently illuminated to be cheerful, but reluctantly and as it were grudgingly accorded a glimmer, which was barely sufficient to unravel the gloom. A solitary gas jet was burning, where three or four others were turned off.

In the Miss Lavenhams’ parlour each sister had a novel in her hand, her feet on the fender, and a candle at her elbow, by whose light she was reading. The two chairs were pulled round in front of a rather disorderly grate, in which the fire had burned low, and where ashes largely predominated.

In truth, the whole small, shabby apartment was at the worst; and as its occupants sprang to their feet on the entrance of a new comer, each was cruelly conscious of its being so. They had not expected anyone; and though of course aware that, in London especially, one should always believe in the unexpected, so few and far between had been their visitors hitherto that they had allowed a dismal afternoon to drift away, and had settled themselves down to read some of the new books lent by Gertrude Rowland, without paying heed to the cheerless aspect of their abode.

‘Even our miserable little messy tea was on the table,’ said Bell, afterwards, ‘with its horrid little tray, and cups of common china. I *was* so ashamed—weren’t you, Monica? And he had never been to see us before—I mean, he had never been let in before. It was so dreadfully unfortunate that he should have come on such a day!’

‘Oh, well, we put it to rights before he left, I think,’ replied her sister, hopefully. ‘And he knows we are only in lodgings, so that we cannot be expected to have things comfortable.’

‘But we do sometimes have them comfortable—that was the worst of it. We can at least make the room look tidy and bright. The day Lady Annette called, we were looking as nice as possible. It was that which made it so tiresome,’ and there was a suspicion of tears in her mortified tone.

Monica could not help laughing. 'You would have preferred to have had Lady Annette come on the unlucky day, and Mr. Rowland on the lucky day?'

'Pshaw!' said Isabel, turning away.

'Now, my dear Bell, don't "Pshaw!" at me—'tis of no use, and only breeds ill-will. We have had our little quarrel on the subject, and now we are good friends again, and are going to discuss the situation amicably. I was as much annoyed as you were to-day. I was red to the very roots of my hair when that dreadful girl with her dreadful accent bawled out "Mr. Riaowland!" and flung him into the room without giving us a moment's warning. But when I saw how very little of it all he seemed to see, and how absolutely none of it all he seemed to feel, I own I forgot to be vexed, and thought only of—other things.'

'Of what did you think, Monica?' said Bell, in rather a low voice.

'Of you, dear, for one. This is the second time within a few days that this visitor has been here. Meantime we have been there. When either there or here it is the same thing. Shall I put that thing into words?' smiling.

'No, no, don't, Monica,' but Bell was also smiling. 'But, Monica,' she proceeded after a momentary pause, 'if—of course I am only saying "if"—but if it were as you think—do you—I don't quite understand how you are so anxious that—that I——' she faltered and paused.

'My dear sister, do not try to understand. I don't myself understand. I doubt if the matter is understandable, if it comes to that. All I know is this, that if a good fellow with a good fortune comes to you and wishes to marry you, and you think you can like this good fellow—let me see—it will be—it will be *your* good fortune if you secure him. See that?' and without giving her sister an opportunity of replying, she ran away.

She wanted Bell to have time to think. Also she wanted her to be eager for another discussion; and we may add, for the benefit of match-making sisters, that in each of these aims the astute Miss Lavenham was wise to admiration. Before the next meeting Mr. Rowland had, thanks to her discretion, secured his outposts.

'Well, did you find them in? I suppose so, since you are so late?' observed Gertrude on his return to Queen's Gate, on the evening in question. She was still in cloak and bonnet, and had herself only just returned from her afternoon drive.

'You mean the Lavenhams? How did you know I was going there?' replied he, answering one question by another.

'Oh, I knew,' said Gertrude, smiling. 'I guessed. That was why I did not go. Otherwise I should have looked in upon them, for I passed their very door, driving to the Shadwells'; but I put a restraint upon my feelings, and scarcely allowed myself even to look up at their windows.'

'Oh, oh! You expect me to believe that? Well, if you were so near, you might have given me a lift home. I had to find my way through the fog, and that was not easy coming across the Park. The fog——'

'—Now, my dear Ernest, have pity on me, and let the fog alone. Tell me what I really want to know. You saw the girls, and——?' She looked the rest.

'And they will be delighted to dine and go to the theatre on any night we fix.'

'That's right. Now, what night shall it be? This is Monday. Shall we say Thursday or Friday?'

'Why not to-morrow?'

'Too soon, I should think.'

'Too soon? Not at all, at Mitchell's; Mitchell has stalls up to the very last. We did not fix on a play, but I was to consult you. They seemed ready for anything.'

'I am so glad, Ernest.'

'Are you, Gertrude?'

He drew a little nearer.

'There is something about those two,' said she, putting her hand within his arm, 'that fascinates me just as it does you. I don't know what it is, but I like to look at them; to watch them; to admire their pretty ways and pretty movements. They look so perfect altogether. I have seen such girls before, seen them sitting up in carriages in the Park, and at picture galleries and concerts—at all sorts of public places in London—but I do not mind owning that I have never, no never, come into contact with any of their kind before. Down at Oldfield—(Oldfield was the Rowlands' Lancashire home),—where we had our first peep at them; you remember how it was? They were riding with poor Mr. Schofield round by the honeysuckle lane one warm evening. I thought at once I had never seen two more lovely girls. And it was not only their beauty; they sat so gracefully, and talked so charmingly; but oh, my dear Ernest, it is hardly fair in me to run on like this; if I, a woman, have an actual fit of hero-worship for Monica and Isabel, what must you, a man, feel?'

'You are an enthusiast, Gertrude,' but he looked affectionately.

‘And yet they say that women never can appreciate each other,’ pursued she. ‘Now, when I am with Monica Lavenham——’

‘—Oh, it is Monica, is it?’ A faint inflection of disappointment in his tone.

‘It is Monica with me, but,’ said Miss Rowland smiling, ‘it is just as well it is not Monica with you, my dear brother. I imagine you would have been forestalled in that quarter had it been.’

‘You mean,’ he said, ‘by Dorrien?’

‘To be sure; yes; by Mr. Dorrien. Everybody knows it. But as soon as it came out that she had inherited nothing from her uncle, he cried off—at least,’ apologetically, ‘that is what everybody said.’

Her brother looked thoughtfully into the fire. ‘It was true,’ he muttered; then paused, and added slowly, ‘and yet as false as hell.’

‘Oh, Ernest, what a word to use!’ Miss Rowland was not accustomed to such words.

‘Look here, Gertrude,’ said he, turning round to face her. ‘I’ll tell you why I say so. It’s because I *know*—I know the whole truth about that story; and I can only say that if ever I was sorry for any man in my life, I was for poor Harry Dorrien.’

‘Why, Ernest, I never heard you even speak of it.’

‘I never wished to speak of it. It was the sort of thing a fellow does not speak about. When I heard that smooth-tongued, sneaking Lionel Carnforth going about whispering and sniggering, I could have kicked him. He always made himself out to be such a friend of Dorrien’s. But give Lionel a chance of a hit in the back, no matter whose back, and he is never the one to miss taking it.’

‘But what did you know?’

‘I don’t suppose it matters my telling you now,’ said he, after thinking for a moment. ‘I travelled up to town with Harry Dorrien the night he left for Australia. He was simply a broken-hearted man. Mind you, he felt the shame of the thing as well as all the rest. It was perfectly maddening to him not only to have to give up Miss Lavenham, but to have to do so in such a way—for such a shabby reason. He told me that if he could have done anything—scraped enough together by any sort of means—he would have been at her feet the very instant he knew she was penniless. I mean penniless as regarded Joseph Schofield’s money. But he simply has not a farthing of his own, and

neither has his father any to give him. It appears that Sir Arthur is about at the end of his tether. And so the race will die out, unless——' he stopped.

'Unless what?'

'I am sure I don't know. I am afraid it is all up with poor Dorrien; but it gives me a certain interest in Miss Lavenham.'

'Oh, Ernest—oh, fie! Oh, Ernest, you hypocrite!'

'I did not say that it gave me an interest in Miss Isabel Lavenham, Gertrude.'

'Oh? Oh, I understand.' She beamed significance.

'If I succeed in my own hopes,' replied her brother, gazing steadfastly into the glowing embers, 'I would do anything—anything to help Dorrien. My only fear is,'—but he did not explain what that fear was. In his secret heart he had a foreboding of evil.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS EVE.

Sorrows remembered sweeten present joy.—POLLOK.

NOVEMBER passed, and with December days came December weather.

The winter of 1870, it will be remembered, was one of peculiar severity, and frosty days and bitter nights set in shortly before Christmas. On Christmas Eve lakes, rivers, ponds all over the country were bearing; and those who were lucky enough to skate, and light-hearted enough to think of nothing but skating, were in the seventh heaven of delight at the prospect before them.

'But how dismal it would have been in London!' cried Isabel Lavenham, as with radiant eyes she looked out from the windows of a railway carriage, upon snowy landscapes skimming past under rose-tinted skies. 'Oh, Monica, to think what we should have felt if we had been all alone huttering over the fire in that wretched little Albion Street on this Christmas Eve!'

The sisters were flying north as fast as an express train could bear them. They were equipped in handsome travelling dresses, and had fur wraps, bags, and other paraphernalia in the carriage; obviously they were going out of town for Christmas; as obviously were they going with glad hearts. One was simply brimming

over with excitement and joyous anticipation ; she could not keep her countenance in order ; smiles broke out at every moment without any apparent provocation.

The face of the other, though less transformed and irradiated, wore an air of serenity which indeed at times shaded into pensiveness, as she also watched the frost-bound country scenes succeed each other, and with her muff cleared the trickling panes that, as the carriage grew warmer inside, sometimes threatened to obscure her view.

‘I can hardly believe it,’ continued Bell, after another bright silence, during which it was plain that happy visions danced before her eyes. ‘I really can hardly believe it. To be on our way back already ! And oh, Monica, to be so glad to go ! I never thought to see the dear old place again ; it seems years and years since we left it ! And that dreadful day we left, we thought we should never return ! Even then I felt sorry, more sorry than I liked to allow ; but still I did love London, and the thought of going back to London kept me up. But now, Monica, do you not shudder when you look back on these last six weeks ? London, when you are “out of it,” when you are poor, and cannot go to things, and have nobody come near you, and are afraid even to take a hansom for fear of what it will cost—oh, London is a dreadful place in November, and in lodgings !’

‘You had better not rail too much against London, my dear. I expect you will pass a considerable portion of your future life there.’

‘So I shall, so I hope I shall. Just think how delightful it will be ! Ernest says his father means to give us that house in Queen’s Gate for our very own—it is to be his wedding present ; only if we like to change houses with him every now and then we can do so ; but in the future Ernest is to have entire control of the London house, and Mr. Rowland will stick to the Liverpool house.’

‘Hear the child !’ cried Monica, merrily. ‘The “London house” and the “Liverpool house” indeed ! She will know how to take control of both houses in her own person some of these days. And pray, my dear young merchant-princess, what is to become of me when all these fine arrangements are made ? Am I to go on “huttering over the fire” in Albion Street ?’

‘Why, you *know*, Monica—what in the world do you mean ? As if—and you know the very instant it was settled, how Ernest——’

‘—Oh yes, “Ernest”!’ Monica made a mocking face. ‘Ernest is all that is honey-sweet to me, of course. And well he may be; he owes me a good turn. Well, well, my dear, we sha’n’t squabble. I daresay there will be an inch of carpet for me in your gorgeous mansion, and perhaps now and then you will permit me to sit with my back to the horses in your grand carriage.’

‘You silly!’ But even Bell could see her sister was jesting. ‘Don’t you wonder what Uncle Lavenham and Aunt Fanny will say?’ she cried next. ‘They ought to have heard by this time. Let me see. We wrote the night before last. I suppose we ought to have written sooner, but you wished to wait till everyone had heard from everyone, and all that. Now I shall be curious to see how they will take it.’

‘Set your curiosity at rest,’ observed Monica, drily. ‘If you care to listen to me I can give you a perfect fac-simile of the scene. Time, 10 A.M. Breakfast on a little round table, in the midst of many more little round tables, in the morning-room of the best hotel of Monte Carlo. Enter Colonel and Mrs. Lavenham; not quite so much of invalids as they would have the world generally, and their dear nieces in particular, believe; in fact, quite able to enjoy having their breakfast in the public room, and in the midst of all the counts and barons. Then they open their letters—those from poor dear Monica and Isabel last, because the poor dear girls never have anything to say, can have nothing to say—and because doleful accounts of London fogs and London lodgings are not appetising for the morning meal. At length, however, they do open “poor dear Bell’s” letter. They open yours first, my dear Bell, because they are not afraid of you; they know you are a grumbler——’

‘—Monica, you should not call me a grumbler. Pray do not call me a grumbler before Ernest; he would not like it; and I am sure if ever I did grumble a little at one time, I am not going to do so any more.’

‘You will have wondrous little to grumble at; but, however—(Mrs. Schofield again, Bell; it is the “coming event” of her presence which “casts its shadow before.” By the way, I shall go over to see Mrs. Schofield at once, to-morrow; I am actually looking forward to going)—but, however, I have no doubt you will do a little, little jeremiad now and again, just to keep your hand in. I shall expect something of this sort presently: “Ernest, my French maid *is* so stupid!” or, “My second footman *is* so ugly!”’

‘Oh, Monica, Monica!’

‘And now you have thrown me off my Lavenham tableau. I had just come to the place where your letter has priority of attention. What a shock—what an agony of delight it will cause them! Aunt Fanny will turn up her eyes to thank Providence—(they left us to Providence, you see, so naturally they know whom to thank)—and uncle Lavenham will take all the honour and glory to himself. How he will strut and swagger! He will sit down to his desk and pen us such an effusion. The worst of it is, I am afraid there really will be some justice in his crow, for undoubtedly if we had not taken kindly to our Schofield connections, and they to us, we should never have known the Rowlands. We shall have to put up with Uncle Lavenham’s congratulations, Bell.’

‘You think he and Aunt Fanny will be pleased?’

‘Pleased?’ Monica laughed with all her old scorn. ‘Pleased, my dear Bell, is a faint, mild, poor, wishy-washy word for the sensation they will experience. They will be transported, enchanted, absolutely convulsed with ecstasy. Not only will they perceive you settled in state—for the Rowlands must be even richer than I thought they were,—but they will see me—in their mind’s eye—treading in your steps. They will say——’ and she broke off and laughed a little.

‘What will they say? Why do you laugh?’

‘I was going to be very conceited; and, now I think of it, I shall be conceited still. You are bound to be number one all day long at the place we are going to; all the affection and attention, and fuss and fume will be about you and over you; so it will be a nice little antidote for you beforehand to hear what Uncle Lavenham’s ruminations will be on the subject.’

‘Well, go on.’ Neither her uncle’s nor anyone else’s ruminations could do away with the grand fact which had wrought as by magic such a change in Isabel Lavenham’s life, and her complacency being so great, Monica proceeded merrily:—

‘He will say: “By Jove, my dear, since Bell has done so well, why should not Monica do still better? Monica is the handsomer of the two; she has style, air, carriage”—(he always used to tell me I had “style, air, carriage,” when I was to be spurred on to look out for a coronet)—“why should she not double Bell’s good luck? She will now have a decent house to be seen at and to be taken about from——”’

‘—But will they think that of a house in Queen’s Gate?’

‘Pooh, pooh! my dear Bell, you don’t yet understand things.

When we are very fine and fashionable, and fearfully alive to every speck on our Belgravian garments, we cannot afford to let their lustre be dimmed by so much as the shade of Queen's Gate falling across them. That is, when we have no *reason* for being civil to Queen's Gate, do you see; no *object* for recognising its claims. When Uncle Lavenham and Aunt Fanny first took us up, they and we were on our promotion; we regularly cringed into ourselves for fear of contamination on every side. We scarcely dared to know anybody who was not vouched for by some recognised authority in our own set. We shook with trepidation lest anything we did should receive a stare or a comment. I believe Aunt Fanny was in utter thralldom to that sister-in-law of hers, that Lady Sophia whom we used to hate; and I am sure Uncle Lavenham had one or two men at his club before whose opinion he shook in his shoes. So, in those days, the mention of Queen's Gate—or of any other Gate in that neighbourhood—would have blistered their lips. But, my dear, a marriage, a solid, substantial, useful alliance alters all that. I remember reading somewhere of a girl who exclaimed in wonder that a friend should marry a man she had once declared she would not dance with. The answer was that one would marry many a man one would not dance with. Do you perceive the moral of the tale?’

‘No, I don’t,’ said Bell, bluntly. ‘I would dance with Ernest with pleasure. I am sure he dances beautifully.’

‘You tiresome creature! My rhetoric is wasted on you. *That*, my dear Bell, was not the point at all. The point was, that whereas Uncle Lavenham might, and probably would, have been a little shy about walking with this Ernest of yours along St. James’s had he only known him as Mr. Ernest Rowland, a rich young merchant, with no smart relations or dashing predilections; as *your husband*, as the man who has taken his troublesome niece off his hands and made upon her a rampant settlement, he will be his very humble servant. He will dine with you, my dear Bell, with all the pleasure in life. He will ask you to drive him in the Park. He will do still more: he will perform what he considers the whole duty of man towards his new nephew, in that he will invite him to lunch at his club.’

In saying all of which Monica had an object. She desired that her sister should clearly understand both what she would gain and what she would lose by her marriage with Ernest Rowland. The gain would infinitely outbalance the loss,—but still it was as well that Bell, in the first flush of her new-found

bliss, should recollect that she was wedding, with the full consent and approbation of her own people, one whom hitherto she and they would have considered outside the pale.

This need not afflict her, and it would prevent any shock of after-discoveries. If former acquaintances should on their return to London be less ardent and intimate than they had been, Bell would be prepared. It would only need that Monica should remind her of this conversation, and other similar ones, and she would soon become acclimatised to the new state of things.

Moreover Isabel had by this time had her own pinch of experience. Six weeks either may or may not be a long period of time. If it be passed amidst congenial surroundings, in health and happiness, it flies like the wind; but if struggled through under a load of daily privations, disappointments, and anxiety, it seems as though it never would end.

Each morning of late had seen our fair sisters rise to encounter cheerless meals, aimless peregrinations, and interminable intervals. They knew not how to get through their days. The expeditions which Monica projected one after another fell through. The distances were so great, the days so short and dark, their means of getting about so limited, that they had at last cared only to walk disconsolately about in the Park, or Gardens, returning to their own dull room as soon as a sense of duty would permit. 'We must go out, I suppose,' had been their reluctant conclusion on each dreary day; but if they had consulted their inclinations they would almost have preferred staying at home.

Nor had the friendship of the Rowlands done much towards mitigating the monotony of the routine for some little time. With admirable tact and patience the brother and sister had felt their way inch by inch, never intruding, never thrusting themselves forward, and above all never offering attentions which it was impossible to refuse. 'They may be very glad to see us, and not sorry to go about with us, just at this time of year when no one they know is in London,' Gertrude observed; 'but, Ernest, do not let us run on too fast. If—if there should be any mistake,' she had whispered tenderly, hardly liking to look at him as she made the suggestion. He had heard her in silence, but let several days elapse before venturing upon his next appearance in Albion Street.

It had then been Monica's turn to whisper, 'If—if there should be any mistake?' and Bell's to look a little pale at the suggestion.

All had, however, gone right in the end; within a week of Christmas Day the *dénouement* had taken place, and now, as we know, Miss Isabel Lavenham, with her overflowing spirits painted upon either cheek, was hurrying down to the country home of her betrothed, to meet him there, and be presented as his future bride to a large family party gathered for the occasion.

It was barely dusk when the travellers arrived, and the commodious mansion was gleaming with firelight, while the last rays of the wintry sun hovered over it, and brightened roof and turret, gable and archway. Ernest was in the shrubbery, and dashed on to the step of the waggonette as they neared the door; within the doorway they had a glimpse of the commanding presence of his father, as the horses whirled round to enter the portico with a flourish; and Mrs. Rowland's stately form emerged from the nearest apartment as the sisters entered. There was no time for shyness or nervousness.

Bell must of course be first with all, but the undisguised warmth with which Monica was also welcomed made her anew congratulate herself that in this house at least she had nothing whereof to repent. She had always been polite to the Rowlands: they were not to know that but for circumstances she might never have been anything more; and now, now she felt that she could meet all advances and respond to everyone's cordiality with an alacrity unfettered by any twinges of conscience.

An agreeable party was gathered in the house, and her last vestige of apprehension was swept away. She found herself among people with whom she and her sister could contentedly associate, and of whom they need never be ashamed.

One trifling incident alone occurred to trouble her mind throughout the perfect harmony of the evening.

'The Carnforths' dance is to be on Friday,' said a girlish voice. 'Ernest, we told you and Gertrude about it, did we not? They are going to have the house full; and what a party *we* shall be! We shall need three or four carriages. Some of you men must go in the dogcarts.'

'Not if it freezes like this, thank you, Florrie. We shall seek shelter beneath some neighbour's roof-tree if you refuse to take us inside with you. Is it to be a big dance? Is everyone going?'

'Oh, dear me, yes; it is to be quite a ball! Lionel Carnforth has been hunting up men for it all over the place.'

'We shall be a pretty equal number,' said another, looking

round. 'Six girls and six men, and mamma. If papa would only go——'

Papa, however, declined. It was not good enough, according to him. He did not mind a county ball, and he would now and again go to a Wellington Rooms ball; but a ball at the Carnforths'! He shook his head.

Monica shook hers imperceptibly also.

It was not good enough for her either. What? Go to that house where—where—she felt the warm colour stealing over her face and neck, as she finished the sentence to herself. She knew that it was at the Carnforths' that Dorrien had betrayed himself to the world: she knew that he and she had there been the mark for every eye, and that their behaviour during the evening had subsequently been the theme for every tongue. She knew it, and blushed to think of it.

So conscious was she of her own thoughts that she almost wondered how anyone could name the Carnforths' name to her, or in her presence; it seemed a positive indelicacy to count upon her going to the ball.

When the night for it came, Miss Lavenham was indisposed.

'But you may tell Ernest how it is,' said she, quietly, when alone with her sister. 'Ernest must have heard about Mr. Dorrien and me. And I should like him to know I am not altogether a heartless flirt, even at the expense of his considering me a forlorn damsel,' with a faint smile.

'You mean that you would like him to know that you *do* care.' Bell pressed closer to her sister.

'That I *did* care—once.'

'You do now, Monica.' But Monica turned slowly away.

'Why, of course, she cares, and I honour her for it,' asserted Ernest, when the confidence was made. 'If Monica had not cared for Dorrien, after breaking the poor fellow's heart——' his lips closed abruptly.

'Ernest, what do you know about Mr. Dorrien's heart?' Isabel's grey eyes opened. 'It was very sad,' she added, pathetically, 'but it could not be helped. Monica is going to forget him, and says he will forget her. They really must forget each other, you know; they can do nothing else.'

'No, I suppose they can do nothing else. But yet,' subjoined he, half aside, 'I am glad she should not go to the Carnforths'.'

The Carnforths, however, were not so glad. They had baited their hooks in all directions with the beautiful Miss Lavenhams.

They had caused it to be supposed that it was their ball which had brought the illustrious visitors once more to the neighbourhood. Mrs. Carnforth had openly regretted the impossibility of housing the sisters, since her house would be already full. Lionel had vaunted their charms to every dancing man whom he wished to secure.

'Dancing men' had now taken the place of 'shooting men' in the family *répertoire*. 'Dancing men' were to be stowed away in every nook and corner of Bingley Hall on the 28th. Traps for 'dancing men' went down to meet every train. The luggage of 'dancing men' was going wrong in all directions.

'So that we really could not put up the Miss Lavenhams, much as I should have liked to do so,' lamented Mrs. Carnforth in a conclave before one of her large wood fires. 'But they will be very comfortable at the Rowlands'. They are at the Rowlands', you know. Nice, kindly people, who have always room for everybody, and are coming over in a large party.'

'Ernest Rowland has come down from London for our ball,' added her son. 'It is said he is another of Miss Lavenham's admirers.'

'George Schofield was hard hit too,' observed Captain Alverstoke, who was the latest arrival and the only stranger present. 'Lionel, you and I were not in the swim. How was that?'

'Dorrien said so plainly, "Hands off!" Alverstoke, that we had no chance.'

'By the way, where is Mr. Dorrien?' inquired Mrs. Carnforth. 'We shall miss him to-night. He always came to our little dances. We used to reckon upon him as one of our dancing men, did we not, Grace? Does anyone know where Mr. Dorrien is? Of course I know he is at the Antipodes, but does anyone know where—I mean to what part he went?'

'I don't know, but I should like very much to know,' said Alverstoke, drily. He had partly come to the Carnforths' in order to find this out.

The only people whom he asked, however, could give him no information. Isabel Lavenham had neither seen nor heard anything of Mr. Dorrien since he left England. George Schofield had neither seen nor heard anything since he left Cullington; and it did not occur to the inquirer to ask Ernest Rowland.

When he heard, however, that the elder Miss Lavenham was suffering from headache, from which cause she had had to remain at home, he fancied he knew what to think.

Then he had the surprise, as nearly all present had the surprise, of hearing about the new engagement. It had not been announced before; but it was now buzzed all over the room, and many and various were the emotions it excited.

'Is it really true, Gertrude?' Mrs. Carnforth, in the very midst of her duties as hostess, caught a whisper of the news. 'Is it really true?' she demanded, with a quick accent.

Ernest Rowland had for years been her mark, if not for Gracie, at least for one of the younger girls, and she had only recently resolved to push the siege and see if Ethel's charms could not effect what her sister's had failed to achieve.

'Quite true, Mrs. Carnforth,' replied Miss Rowland, demurely. She also had her *arrière pensée* on the matter as regarded Bingley Hall.

'It must have been very quickly made up, surely'; the elder lady twirled her fan. 'I really fancied you knew'—the Miss Lavenhams so slightly that I don't believe we ever asked you to meet them. No, I am sure we never did.'

'No, you never did.' Gertrude was still demure, and still amused by her own thoughts.

'Of course they were not *much* here,' continued Mrs. Carnforth; 'poor Mr. Schofield dying so soon after we returned from my uncle's moor, and we having gone to Scotland rather earlier than usual last year, we did not see so much of them as we should have done, and they were not *often* here—but still,' discomfiture and chagrin manifesting themselves upon her countenance, 'still I—we—really I hardly knew you were acquainted at all.'

Gertrude smiled.

'So I suppose I must congratulate Ernest,' continued Mrs. Carnforth, tartly. 'I am sure I hope he will be happy. He has certainly done well in choosing the one he has. Isabel may not be so good-looking as Monica, but she is better behaved. The other is a dreadful flirt'; her ill-humour increasing as she watched the happy pair circling round to the strains of the waltz, the countenance of the one illumined by an air of sweet satisfaction and content, that of the other glowing with proud and fond devotion.

She was jealous of both, and angry with both. There were two sides to the question, and each side was equally ill to look at. Isabel Lavenham had stolen a march not only upon her girls, but upon all the girls in the neighbourhood, in that she had carried off the richest young bachelor in that part of the world; but

Ernest Rowland, on his part, had had no business to go in for birth and fashion. What had he and his to do with fashion? The Rowlands had always made out that fashion was out of their line altogether; nay, the Carnforths had been conscious of having been looked upon by them with contempt upon this very score. Yet here were these steady-going, jog-trot old neighbours, who never moved an inch ahead of the times, and could scarcely be induced even to follow with a lagging step—who could hardly be despised, and yet according to the Carnforths' view ought to be despised, for their want of enterprise, lack of spirit, and dash, and splash—here were they about to cut out the very Carnforths themselves on their own ground!

Gentle as Isabel Lavenham looked, there would be no chance of teaching Mrs. Ernest Rowland the last new thing.

Now all that could be done was to shrug a peevish shoulder, and make little spiteful speeches.

How provoking it was! Here were Lionel's 'dancing men' all looking about for Lionel's promised beauties, and here was Lionel's mother obliged to confess that Monica would not come, and that Isabel might also have stayed away for all the good they were likely to have of her. Bell's dances were distributed among the Rowland party: she had scarce one left for Lionel himself.

Greatly did one person present enjoy the discomfiture of his hostess. 'Rough on the old lady this,' quoth Captain Alverstoke, stroking his moustache to hide a grin. 'She should have been more careful, though. After giving out right and left that the Lavenham girls are down for her ball, it now comes out that they are down on quite other business! All the swagger goes to the Rowlands. Must congratulate Rowland'; and he sauntered past a group of disappointed and irate young fellows, who were now turning up their noses, and gradually developing different complaints which stood in the way of their being introduced to partners of Lionel Carnforth's choosing.

They had been promised a very gay affair indeed; they did not think this promise had been fulfilled. The Carnforths, we must explain, had failed in other quarters as well as in that above recorded; and to tell the truth the ball, as a ball, was not brilliant.

'Positively not a creature worth looking at here,' sniffed Master Algernon Vavasour, a very particular and choice young personage. 'Positively I don't care to know any one of the lot. That girl there,' indicating Isabel Lavenham, 'that's one of the Lavenhams, I know—I met her in Town once; jolly pretty girl she

is, and so is her sister ; but the sister has shirked ; and this one, it seems, is only for the long fellow who is to marry her, they say. All right ; I've no objection ; it's quite fair and square,—only what the deuce, then, do they mean by supposing she is any good to *us* ? There's no one else. I have danced with the Carnforth girls till I can't stand any more of that lot. I've had enough of this ball. Alverstoke—I say, Alverstoke,' in a new tone, at once joyous and natural. ' Archie, let's be ill and go to bed. Picquet, eh ? Toothache—headache—eh ? I say, Archie, that will do the trick. My room is next yours ; Ricketts will see to us, and we'll have a night of it. All right, eh ? '

' All right ' ; Alverstoke imperceptibly nodded.

' Don't be long.'

' I'll not be long.'

' And I'll interview Ricketts. Hot or cold drink, or champagne—or—— ? Never mind, leave it to me. Ta-ta ' ; and the speaker slipped behind backs, and vanished on the instant.

This was how some of the ' dancing men ' acquitted themselves at the Carnforths'.

' But I must find out if anyone knows anything of Dorrien,' quoth Alverstoke to himself, the following morning. ' Three or four thou. is all very well, and I hardly expected to see it again ; still—well, I suppose it will end in my going to Sir Arthur—though it is a hundred to one if I get the truth out of him, even supposing he knows it himself.'

Sir Arthur did know, declared he knew—was, indeed, rather inclined to be testily communicative on the subject. Oh, he could tell Captain Alverstoke about Harry ; could tell all about him ; would look out the direction if Alverstoke would wait for it ; did not suppose there would be any good in writing, at least not yet awhile ; did not suppose Harry would be over eager for letters.

' Went out to a relation, did he not ? ' Captain Alverstoke shot a glance as he spoke.

' To that vagabondish nephew of mine. To that scamp, Luke Dorrien. What he pitched upon Luke for, Heaven only knows ! And Heaven only knows where the two are now ! I have the direction—but, after all, what is the use of the direction ? ' suddenly staring into Alverstoke's face. ' You know as well as I, Captain Alverstoke, that the direction a young fellow like Harry gives is often the very last likely to find him ! '

' I assure you,' said Alverstoke, replying to the stare, ' that I

have no desire to hurt Harry. I may say I am his *friend*,' emphatically. 'I knew he had gone out to your nephew, and I particularly wished to know if he had found him.'

'You think he had better not find him?'

'On the contrary, I very much hope he may.'

Sir Arthur looked astonished.

'I hope it from the bottom of my heart,' said Alverstoke slowly. 'So now, Sir Arthur, will you give me the direction?'

Sir Arthur looked a little foolish.

'But I—I really have not got it to give,' he owned.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

DAISY AND MONICA.

Rare is true love ; true friendship is still rarer.

LET us take a few days' retrospect.

It was with a curious mingling of emotions that Monica Lavenham found herself once again traversing the lanes which had formerly been so familiar.

She had been gone just long enough to make such a return seem its strangest. Nothing had altered,—nothing had had time to alter,—yet in a manner she felt as if she had been years away ! She had gone with all the sense of going for ever. Her departure had been in her own mind absolutely final ; and accordingly, if on the very next day after it had taken place she had been transplanted back again, there would have been a stirring up of associations and a recalling of bygone scenes such as would have been meet after long separation and exile.

The Grange, for instance, she had never beheld since the day on which she had had her interview with Daisy in the wood below. The after-events of that eventful day had been of such a nature as to make her thenceforth shrink not only from going thither, but even from wending her way in that direction. She had forced herself to say 'Good-bye,' to one and another who, living in the immediate vicinity of Flodden Hall, would have been wounded or affronted by an omission of civility inexcusable on the plea of deep mourning. Monica and Isabel had not been orphaned ; neither had they lost a life-long friend in their elderly relation ; wherefore, as Monica herself could not but own, to have left the

neighbourhood without any of the customary formalities of leave-taking would have shown the sisters wanting alike in good manners and good feeling. What concerned her more was that Mr. Schofield would have wished her to go. She had set her teeth, and made a round of calls.

She did not, however, see fit to specify the date of her and her sister's departure, and had, as we know, only written to the Schofields when it had actually taken place.

To be now bowling along in the Rowlands' carriage! To be back in the neighbourhood as the Rowlands' guests! To be looking upon it all, as it were, from the Rowlands' standpoint! It did feel odd, incongruous, unnatural. The Rowlands, who had been so little to them once, to be now their all! People talked to them as if they and the Rowlands were one. Arrangements were made, invitations given and accepted, future plans discussed, as if all were of one family, one household; and though unable to demur to such a state of things, Monica was conscious of some secret reservations on the subject.

She had asked to go alone to the Schofields; she could not have explained why, but it would have disconcerted her to be taken thither under Mrs. Rowland's wing; and infinitely less refined and cultivated as were her relations at the Grange, her heart went out to them in a way that astonished herself. They would have shown to as little advantage in the presence of Mrs. Rowland, a stately and somewhat formal matron, as in that of the timid, insipid, elegant Lady Dorrien. Of the two, indeed, Lady Dorrien would have put them more at their ease. She would have done anything she was bidden do, and refrained from seeing anything as to which she had been desired to be blind, if only she might please Sir Arthur,—but Mrs. Rowland would have been less accommodating.

Monica could see, and it amused her to see, that in the eyes of Ernest's people, the Schofield connection was the fly in the ointment as regarded the forthcoming marriage. She had caught the words 'Only *second* cousins,' more than once repeated with considerable emphasis, when the neighbouring families had neighbour-like alluded to the occupants of the Grange. Obviously the Grange was to Oldfield its wincing point. This was a new discovery to Monica. 'I am learning a great deal,' she said to herself.

She had therefore boldly requested to go alone on the day after Christmas Day, and had done so, and found all the family at

home, even to George, who had taken a holiday although at that period Boxing Day was not, as now, a bank holiday.

They did not shine, poor folks; and their visitor was still more glad than before, that she had brought none of the well-mannered, superior Rowlands with her. For herself, she could endure with perfect equanimity the anxious hospitalities and effusive congratulations of worthy Mrs. Schofield, could see in them and hear in them only the kind heart beating beneath,—but it would have been too much to have had Isabel's future connections present.

The scene was something like this:

'Now, Monica, do tell me the ups and downs of it all; the whole story about Bell and her engagement,' cried mamma, bumping into her great chair by the fire. 'Now, girls, do hold your tongues, all of you; and let Monica speak. Monica, my dear, whatever are you eating bread-and-butter for, when here are the crumpets all nice and hot? Now just put away that bread-and-butter; Daisy, take it from her; that's right; now pull round her chair that I may see her. Well, I do say she is looking well; isn't she, George? Oh, George, oh,—' with a sudden and most transparent recollection. 'Oh, George, my—my dear, just take off your great thick boots, won't you? Look what they have left on the carpet there!' pointing to small cakes of mashed-up snow which marked his steps.

'George "balls" like a horse,' said Monica, bursting out laughing as she, too, looked.

'Anyone would "ball" who had been out where I have been,' protested he, somewhat gruffly. 'What harm can snow do to anything?' And he came and stood in front of the fire.

'He is the worst of them all,' reflected Miss Lavenham, her laugh dying away. She did not pretend not to know, she was perfectly cognisant of the feeling which made him keep his ground. Nevertheless, looking upon the featureless, sodden, unintelligent face, slouching shoulders, and boorish attitudes before her, she did not, I must own, feel any very great pity for George. Like Daisy, she thought to herself, '*George!*'—and was merciless.

Yet Mrs. Schofield was now haunted by one daily fear—namely, that George would be entrapped into matrimony. In every amiable young person who was attentive to her, or who smiled while shaking hands with her son, she beheld an aspirant for the hand of the head of the firm. As the head of the firm she now

looked upon her firstborn ; and, truth to tell, she was at the very moment cogitating within her secret soul whether, Isabel having done so well as to secure young Rowland, Monica had not made up her mind to rival her by having young Schofield. Monica's coming over alone, and so soon, favoured the notion,—but certainly Monica's air, and manner, and a certain thrill of contempt in her laugh, went far towards dispelling it. 'Well, if George would only get out of the way,' she began, peering round and round him, to catch her visitor's eye.

'Why should I get out of the way?' demanded he. 'You are always wanting me out of the way. So is Daisy. What harm do I do you? I am sure I am not so much at home but that you might endure the sight of me once and away.'

'Well, no, of course; of course you are right, George': George's mother was melted in an instant; 'but, you see, we want to see Monica.'

'So do I want to see Monica. I have not seen her for as long as you.' Monica quietly moved to another chair.

'There now, that's right; now we're all pleased,' and Mrs. Schofield sank back contentedly; 'now, Monica, let us hear you talk. Tell us about the engagement—and about the marriage—and how you like it—how your uncle and aunt like it—and oh, poor Cousin Joseph, how pleased he would have been! And to think of your being back here not two months after you left—you that we thought had gone for good! But London suits you, Monica; or else it is something else which suits you, for I never saw you looking handsomer. And there's a compliment from an old lady, if you please.'

At last Daisy took her mother by the shoulders. 'If we are to hear a word from Monica,' she said, 'somebody else must be quiet. You want to hear what Monica has got to say, don't you?'

'There is no occasion for you to put in your oar, all the same,' muttered George. He was certainly not a pleasant member of a family circle. No communications produced from him a response, neither did maternal appeals an acquiescence. He listened to all that was said, and each speaker by turns felt that he was internally passing his own comments. It would have been a relief to have had him go. He had, however, his reasons for staying, and at length these appeared.

'Are you here for long?' he inquired abruptly, during a pause, wherein Mrs. Schofield fanned herself, as was her wont

when warmed by discussion, and Daisy sat considering what she should ask about next.

‘Not very long,’ replied Monica. ‘We shall have a good deal to do when we get back to Town.’

‘To Town? That’s London. Where are you going to in London?’

‘Oh, to Queen’s Gate,’ said Monica, smiling. Her smile was for herself. ‘Mrs. Rowland is to keep house there for the next month in order to make it all right and proper, so that we shall be with them, I fancy, till the wedding takes place. It is not as if we had anywhere else to go,’ she added, quietly.

‘Are you going to the Carnforths’ to-morrow?’

‘To the ball? I believe so. I believe everyone is going. There is a large party at Oldfield.’ This had satisfied George, and sent him away at last. Of his subsequent indignation and unavailing gloom, when he found he had been in his own phrase ‘done’ in the matter—for he, no more than others, had faith in the headache—it boots not here to speak. He had at last taken himself off his mother’s rug, and left the three ladies alone. Two of them wondered whether the third would not bethink herself of retiring also.

‘We might have a nice talk,’ reflected Monica. ‘I could tell Daisy a great deal, and feel that she would understand things. Daisy has so much sense. And—and we might talk of other matters besides Bell’s engagement. I am just a very, very little tired of hearing about nothing else than this engagement. It is dreadfully selfish of me: but when morning, noon, and night, every single person who comes up with a smile, begins with some little speech or other, invariably including ‘your sister’s engagement,’ it does begin to pall. We shall settle down soon, and have done with the novelty of the thing, and the repetition of the same phrases for everybody; and when we go back to Town and begin the shopping it will be very good fun. There will be the presents, too, and all kinds of things going on. But I should, oh, I should have liked to have dropped Bell and Ernest for an hour or so while I am in this house;—oh, she is actually going!’ Marvellous to relate, the worthy mother was, by slow degrees, easing herself of her cumbrous chair, and preparing to sally forth. She had caught Daisy’s eye.

Directly they were alone Daisy came close, and put her arm round Monica’s neck. ‘I want to say something,’ she began.

‘Say on,’ said Monica. Each felt no need of circumlocution.

‘Monica, tell me—I am sure you will tell me what passed between you and Mr. Dorrien before he left.’

'I wished to tell you, Daisy.' The tone of the speaker was calm and gentle, as that of the other had been; and if the pulses of each fair one beat a little faster than was their wont at the mention of a certain name, no one would have guessed it. 'I only saw Mr. Dorrien once after that dreadful day,' proceeded Monica. 'You remember that he was with us, that it was he who told us what had happened. Afterwards I thought I should wait till after the—the funeral, before admitting him again; and then—you know, Daisy, what happened then.'

'I know.'

'He left Cullingdon immediately, and I thought—everyone thought—he had gone for altogether. People must have guessed why—but it was the best thing he could do. You heard of his going, did you not?'

'Vaguely, yes. But I heard—we heard—at least I thought we heard that he had come back again.'

'What did you hear besides?' said Monica, breathing quickly.

'That you were seen together on board the Birkenhead boat,' replied Daisy in a low voice. 'And *some* declared that he had gone on with you to London.'

'That last was false, Daisy.'

'I never believed it, dear.'

'You good, *kind* girl!' exclaimed Monica impetuously. 'I think you are the truest friend woman ever had. When will you believe ill of me, Daisy?'

'When I see it, Monica.'

'You have seen it to your cost, God knows!' cried Monica with sudden bitterness. 'But you still love me, still believe in me; if ever I am worth anything in this world, or another, it will be to you that I owe it. Now, I will tell you the whole truth—the truth which I have not dared to confide even to my own sister. Bell, you know,' smiling, 'is not exactly discreet, and I have always had to keep some things from her. Now, of course, poor child, everything goes straight to Ernest, so I shall have to be on my guard more than ever—only now, now,' with a restless movement, 'there is nothing to be on my guard about.'

Her cousin stooped and kissed her brow. 'Tell me the tale,' she said.

Half an hour later, when Mrs. Schofield came back, the tale had been told, and even she could gather as much.

'I suppose you wanted a word with her about that Dorrien

affair,' she said, as soon as the visitor had departed. 'What had Monica to say for herself?'

'What I knew she would have to say. Her meeting with Mr. Dorrien was by the purest accident, and he merely saw them into the train for London, as any gentleman would have done. He did not even go up by the same train.'

'It was a queer accident, all the same,' observed Mrs. Schofield sententiously. 'I don't put much faith in those kind of accidents.'

'You must put faith in Monica, mamma.'

'Well, I don't know; I suppose I must,' with a dubious brow; 'but, however,' rejoined Mrs. Schofield, taking refuge in her favourite formula, 'but, however, Daisy, child, Monica has only to answer for herself. It may have been accident with *her*, but it was none with *him*, I'll vouch for him.'

'He declared it was, and Monica believed him. Besides, he could not have known their intentions, for they had confided them to no one.'

'Ah, there you are now; now I believe you,' cried Mrs. Schofield, feeling very shrewd and practical. 'If you can give me any reason why Mr. Dorrien *could* not know, then, say I, let him not know. But if he had fished out, by hook or by crook, that those girls were crossing the river to go on their travels from the other side, I'll never believe to my dying day but what he went the same way on purpose.'

'If he had, I should not have blamed him.'

'Blamed him? I don't know about that. He had made her enough talked about as it was. First, it was all over the place that he was after her; then that he was off with her; and I think the least he could do after all that was not to meet her on the Birkenhead boat.'

'But I think,' mused poor Daisy to herself, 'that if it had been me, I should have found no fault with such a meeting.'

She had listened to Monica with tingling veins and a burning cheek. Almost every syllable of the recital gave her pain, and yet it was pain of such a strange nature that she would not have spared one throb of it. It caused her an exquisite, mysterious, inexplicable joy to feel its torture. Souls who suffer for one another have, 'tis said, such joy. This poor, little, insignificant, uninteresting Daisy Schofield hugged it to her bosom.

She flew away to be alone and indulge in her treasure. She pictured to herself the deepening fog, the clanging bells, the

whole weird scene ; she felt, as though she were Monica herself, the other's sense of desolation and loneliness ; stood, as Monica had stood, gazing listlessly on the arriving passengers ; beheld Dorrien ; walked away ; was conscious that he followed, knew he was there. But here the curtain fell.

The narrator's voice had ceased. The rest was left to imagination and conviction.

That all had been explained and forgiven, was, however, manifest.

The two had parted with no embittering restraint and reserve ; they had parted, it might be, to meet no more this side the grave ; but—had parted as lovers should.

'There is nothing now to separate them,' said little Daisy to herself, with a sigh, 'nothing but this miserable, miserable money.'

(To be continued.)

The Spanish Story of the Armada.

I.

THE fate of the great expedition sent by Philip the Second to restore the Papal authority in England has been related often in prose and verse. It is the most dramatic incident in our national history, and the materials for a faithful account of it in the contemporary narratives are unusually excellent. The English nature on that occasion was seen at its very best. The days had not yet come of inflated self-praise, and the spirit which produces actions of real merit is usually simple in the description of such actions. Good wine needs no bush. The finest jewels need least a gaudy setting; and as the newspaper correspondent was not yet born, and the men who did the fighting wrote also the reports, the same fine and modest temper is equally seen in both.

Necessarily, however, Englishmen could only tell what they themselves had seen, and the other side of the story has been left untold. The Spanish historians have never attempted to minimise the magnitude of their disaster, but they have left the official records to sleep in the shades of their public offices, and what the Spanish commanders might have themselves to say of their defeat and its causes has been left hitherto unprinted. I discovered myself at Simancas the narrative of the Accountant-General of the Fleet, Don Pedro Coco Calderon, and made use of it in my own history. But Don Pedro's account showed only how much more remained to be discovered, of which I myself could find no record either in print or MS.

The defect has now been supplied by the industry and patriotism of an officer in the present Spanish Navy, who has brought together a collection of letters and documents bearing on the subject which is signally curious and interesting. Captain Fernandez Duro deserves grateful thanks and recognition, as enabling us for the first time really to understand what took place. But

more than that, he reproduces the spirit and genius of the time ; he enables us to see, face to face, the De Valdez, the Recaldes, the Oquendos, the De Ley Vas, who had hitherto been only names to us. The 'Iliad' would lose half its interest if we knew only Agamemnon and Achilles and knew nothing of Priam and Hector. The five days' battle in the English Channel in August 1588 was fought out between men on both sides of a signally gallant and noble nature ; and when the asperities of theology shall have mellowed down at last, Spanish and English authorities together will furnish materials for a great epic poem.

Until that happy and still far-distant time shall arrive, we must appropriate and take up into the story Captain Duro's contribution. With innocent necromancy he calls the dead out of their graves, and makes them play their drama over again. With his assistance we will turn to the city of Lisbon, on the 25th of April of the *Annus Mirabilis*. The preparations were then all but completed for the invasion of England and the overthrow of the Protestant heresy. From all parts of Catholic Europe the prayers of the faithful had ascended for more than a year in a stream of passionate entreaty that God would arise and make His power known. Masses had been said day after day on fifty thousand altars ; and devout nuns had bruised their knees in midnight watches on the chapel pavements. The event so long hoped for was to come at last. On that day the consecrated standard was to be presented in state to the Commander-in-Chief of the Expedition. Catholics had collected from every corner of the world : Spanish and Italian, French and Irish, English and German owning a common nationality in the Church. The Portuguese alone of Catholic nations looked on in indifference. Portugal had been recently annexed by force to Spain. The wound was still bleeding, and even religion failed to unite the nobles and people in common cause with their conquerors. But Lisbon had ceased to be a Portuguese city. Philip dealt with it as he pleased, and the Church of Portugal, at least on this occasion, was at Philip's disposition.

There was something of real piety in what was going on ; and there was much of the artificial emotion which bore the same relation to piety which the enthusiasm of the Knight of La Mancha bore to true chivalry. Philip himself in certain aspects of his character was not unlike Don Quixote. He believed that he was divinely commissioned to extirpate the dragons and monsters of heresy. As the adventure with the enchanted

horse had been specially reserved for Don Quixote, so the 'Enterprise of England,' in the inflated language of the time, was said to have been reserved for Philip ; and as analogies are apt to complete themselves, the fat, good-humoured, and entirely incapable Medina Sidonia had a certain resemblance to Sancho. The Duke of Medina had no ambition for such adventures ; he would have greatly preferred staying at home, and only consented to take the command out of a certain dog-like obedience to his master. The representatives of the imaginary powers had been called in to bring him to accept the dangerous responsibility. A pious hermit told him that he had been instituted by the Almighty to promise him victory. The Prioress of the Annunciata Maria di la Visitacion, who had received the five wounds and was punished afterwards as a detected impostor, had seen Santiago and two angels smiting Drake and his unbelieving comrades, and she assured the Duke of glory in both worlds if he went. The Duke's experience of English Admirals had been, so far, not glorious to him at all. He had been in command at Cadiz two years before when the English fleet sailed up the harbour, burnt eighteen large ships, and went off unfought with, taking six more away with them. All Spain had cried shame and called the Duke a coward, but Philip had refused to be displeased, and had deliberately chosen him for an undertaking far more arduous than the defence of a provincial port. On this April 25 he was to receive his commission, with the standard under which he was to go into action, and the Catholic Church was to celebrate the occasion with its imposing splendours and imperious solemnities.

The Armada lay in the Tagus waiting the completion of the ceremony. It was the most powerful armament which had ever been collected in modern Europe, a hundred and thirty ships—great galleons from a thousand to thirteen hundred tons ; galliasses rowed by three hundred slaves, carrying fifty guns ; galleys almost as formidable, and other vessels, the best appointed which Spain and Italy could produce. They carried nine thousand seamen, seasoned mariners who had served in all parts of the world, and seventeen thousand soldiers, who were to join Parma and assist the conquest of England. Besides them were some hundreds of nobles and gentlemen who, with their servants and retinues, had volunteered for the new crusade, gallant high-spirited youths quite ready to fight with Satan himself in the cause of Spain and Holy Church. In them all was a fine profession of enthusiasm—qualified, indeed, among the seamen by a demand for wages in advance and a

tendency to desert when they received them. But a regiment of priests dispersed through the various squadrons kept alive in most the sense that they were going on the most glorious expedition ever undertaken by man.

The standard which was to be presented itself indicated the sacred character of the war. Into the Royal Arms of Spain there had been introduced as supporters on one side Christ on the Cross, on the other the Virgin mother, and on the scroll below was written : 'Exsurge Deus et vindica causam tuam' 'Arise, O Lord, and avenge thy cause.' 'Philip, by the grace of God King of Castille, of Leon, of Aragon, the two Sicilies, Jerusalem, Portugal, Navarre, Granada, Toledo, Valencia, Galicia, Majorca, Sardinia, Cordova, Corsica, Murcia, Jaen, Algaves, Algesiras, Gibraltar, the Canary Islands, the East and West Indies, the Isles and Continents of the Ocean; Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, of Brabant and Milan, Count of Hapsburgh, Count of Flanders, Tirol, and Barcelona; Lord of Biscay and Molina,' &c. ; the monarch, in short, whose name was swathed in these innumerable titles, had determined to commit the sacred banner to his well-beloved Don Alonzo de Guzman, surnamed El Bueno, or the Good, and under its folds to sweep the ocean clear of the piratical squadrons of the English Queen. The scene was the great metropolitan church of Lisbon, the *Iglesia Major*. It was six o'clock in the morning; streets and squares were lined with troops who had been landed from the ships. The King was represented by his nephew, the Cardinal Archduke, who was Viceroy of Portugal. The Viceroy rode out of the Palace with the Duke on his right hand, followed by the gentlemen adventurers of the expedition in their splendid dresses. At the church they were received by the Archbishop. The standard was placed on the altar. Mass was sung. The Viceroy then led the Duke up the altar steps, lifted a fold of the standard and placed it in his hands, while, as the signal was passed outside, the ships in the river and the troops in the streets fired a salute—'una pequeña salva,' a small one, for powder was scarce and there was none to waste. The scene was not impressive; and the effect was frittered away in a complexity of details. The Archbishop took the Holy Sacrament and passed out of the church, followed by a stream of monks and secular clergy. The Archduke and the newly-made Cardinal went after them, the standard being borne by the Duke's cousin, Don Luis of Cordova, who was to accompany him to England. In this order they crossed the great square to the Dominican Convent, where the scene in the *Iglesia Major* was repeated. The Domini-

cans received the procession at the door. The standard was again laid on the altar, this time by the Duke himself, as if to signify the consecration of his own person to the service of the beings whose forms were embroidered upon it. The religious part of the transaction finished, they returned to the Palace, and stood on the marble stairs while the troops fired a second volley. The men were then marched to their boats, with an eye on them to see that none deserted, and his Royal Highness and the Captain-General of the Ocean, as the Duke was now entitled, went in to breakfast.

The presentation had wanted dignity and perhaps seriousness. There was no spontaneous enthusiasm. The Portuguese aristocracy were pointedly absent, and the effect was rather of some artificial display got up by the clergy and the Government. And yet the expedition of which this scene was the preliminary had for sixty years been the dream of Catholic piety, and the discharge at last of a duty with which the Spanish nation appeared to be peculiarly charged. The Reformation in England had commenced with the divorce of a Spanish Princess. Half the English nation had been on Catherine's side and had invited Philip's father to send troops to help them to maintain her. As the quarrel deepened, and England became the stronghold of heresy, the English Catholics, the Popes, the clergy universally had entreated Charles, and Philip after him, to strike at the heart of the mischief and take a step which, if successful, would end the Protestant rebellion and give peace to Europe. The great Emperor and Philip too had listened reluctantly. Rulers responsible for the administration of kingdoms do not willingly encourage subjects in rebellion, even under the plea of religion. The divorce of Catherine had been an affront to Charles the Fifth and to Spain, yet it was not held to be a sufficient ground for war, and Philip had resisted for a quarter of a century the supplications of the suffering saints to deliver them from the tyranny of Elizabeth. It was an age of revolt against established authority. New ideas, new obligations of duty were shaking mankind. Obedience to God was held as superior to obedience to man; while each man was forming for himself his own conception of what God required of him. The intellect of Europe was outgrowing its creed. Part of the world had discovered that doctrines and practices which had lasted for fifteen hundred years were false and idolatrous. The other and larger part called the dissentients rebels and children of the Devil, and set to work to burn and kill them. At such times kings and princes have enough to do to maintain

order in their own dominions, and even when they are of opposite sides have a common interest in maintaining the principle of authority. Nor when the Pope himself spoke on the Catholic side were Catholic princes completely obedient. For the Pope's pretensions to deprive kings and dispose of kingdoms were only believed in by the clergy. No secular sovereign in Europe admitted a right which reduced him to the position of a Pope's vassal. Philip held that he sufficiently discharged his own duties in repressing heresy among his own subjects without interfering with his neighbours. Elizabeth was as little inclined to help Dutch and French and Scotch Calvinists. Yet the power of princes, even in the sixteenth century, was limited, and it rested after all on the goodwill of their own people. Common sympathies bound Catholics to Catholics and Protestants to Protestants, and every country in Europe became a caldron of intrigue and conspiracy. Catholics disclaimed allegiance to Protestant sovereigns, Protestants in Catholic countries looked to their fellow-religionists elsewhere to save them from stake and sword, and thus between all parties, in one form or another, there were perpetual collisions, which the forbearance of statesmen alone prevented from breaking out into universal war.

Complete forbearance was not possible. Community of creed was a real bond which could not be ignored, nor in the general uncertainty could princes afford to reject absolutely and entirely the overtures made to them by each other's subjects. When they could not assist they were obliged to humour and encourage. Charles the Fifth refused to go to war to enforce the sentence of Rome upon Henry the Eighth, but he allowed his ambassadors to thank and stimulate Catherine's English friends. Philip was honestly unwilling to draw the sword against his sister-in-law, Elizabeth; but he was the secular head of Catholic Christendom, bound to the maintenance of the faith. He had been titular King of England, and to him the English Catholics naturally looked as their protector. He had to permit his De Quadras and his Mendozas to intrigue with disaffection, to organise rebellion, and, if other means failed, to encourage the Queen's assassination. To kill dangerous or mischievous individuals was held permissible as an alternative for war, or as a means of ending disturbance. It was approved of even by Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia*. William the Silent was murdered in the Catholic interest. Henri Quatre was murdered in the Catholic interest, and anyone who would do the same to the English Jezebel would be counted to

have done good service. Elizabeth had to defend herself with such resources as she possessed. She could not afford to demand open satisfaction; but she could send secret help to the Prince of Orange; she could allow her privateers to seize Spanish treasures on the high seas or plunder Philip's West Indian cities. She could execute the traitorous priests who were found teaching rebellion in England. Philip in return could let the Inquisition burn English sailors as heretics when they could catch them. And thus the two nations had drifted on, still nominally at peace and each unwilling to declare open war; but peace each year was more difficult to preserve, and Philip was driven on by the necessities of things to some open and decided action. The fate of the Reformation in Europe turned on the event of a conflict between Spain and England. Were England conquered and recovered to the Papacy, it was believed universally that first the Low Countries and then Germany would be obliged to submit.

Several times a Catholic invasion of England had been distinctly contemplated. The Duke of Alva was to have tried it. Don John of Austria was to have tried it. The Duke of Guise was to have tried it. The nearest and latest occasion had been after the Conquest of Portugal and the great defeat of the French at the Azores in 1583. The Spanish Navy was in splendid condition, excited by a brilliant victory, and led by an officer of real distinction, Alonzo de Bazan, Marques de Santa Cruz. A few English privateers had been in the defeated fleet at the battle of Terceira; and Santa Cruz, with the other naval commanders, was eager to follow up his success, and avenge the insults which had been offered for so many years to the Spanish flag by the English corsairs. France, like all Northern Europe, was torn into factions. The Valois princes were Liberal and anti-Spanish. The House of Guise was fanatically Catholic, and too powerful for the Crown to control. Santa Cruz was a diplomatist as well as a seaman. He had his correspondents in England. In Guise he had a friend and confederate. One of the many plots was formed for the murder of Elizabeth. Santa Cruz and the Spanish Navy were to hold the Channel. Guise was to cross under their protection and land an army in Sussex. The Catholics were to rise, set free Mary Stuart and make her Queen. Philip's permission was, however, a necessary condition. Santa Cruz was a rough old sailor, turned of seventy, who meant what he said and spoke his mind plainly. Like his countrymen generally, he was tired of seeing his master for ever halting on his leaden foot (*pié de plomo*); and on August 9, 1583, while

still at the Azores, he wrote to stimulate him to follow up his success by a still more splendid achievement. Philip was now master of the Portuguese Empire. He (Santa Cruz) was ready, if allowed, to add England to his dominions. The Low Countries would then surrender, and the Jezebel who had wrought so much evil in the world would meet her deserts.

Now was the time. The troops were ready, the fleet was ready. Philip talked of expense and difficulty. If difficulty was an objection, the bold admiral said that nothing grand could ever be achieved; and for money, great princes could find money if they wished. The King should have faith in God, whose work he would be doing; and if he was himself permitted to try, he promised that he would have as good success as in his other enterprises.¹

Charles the Fifth, among his other legacies to his son, had left him instructions to distrust France and to preserve the English alliance. The passionate Catholics assured him that the way to keep England was to restore the faith. But Elizabeth was still sovereign, and Catholic conspiracies so far had only brought their leaders to the scaffold. Mary Stuart was a true believer, but she was herself half a Frenchwoman, and Guise's father had defeated Philip's father at Metz, and Guise and Mary masters of France and England both was a perilous possibility. Philip did not assent; he did not refuse. He thanked Santa Cruz for his zeal, but said that he must still wait a little and watch. His waiting did not serve to clear his way. Elizabeth discovered what had been designed for her, and as a return Sir Francis Drake sacked St. Domingo and Carthagena. More than that, she had sent open help to his insurgent provinces, and had taken charge, with the consent of the Hollanders, of Flushing and Brill. Santa Cruz could not but admire the daring of Drake and the genius of the English Queen. They were acting while his own master was asleep. He tried again to rouse him. The Queen, he said, had made herself a name in the world. She had enriched her own subjects out of Spanish spoil. In a single month they had taken a million and a half of ducats. Defensive war was always a failure. Once more the opportunity was his own. France was paralysed, and Elizabeth, though strong abroad, was weak at home, through the disaffection of the Catholics. To delay longer would be to see England grow into a power which he would be unable to deal with. Spain would

¹ *La Armada Invencible*. Por el Capitan de Navio Cesareo Fernández Duro, tomo i. p. 261.

decline, and would lose in mere money more than four times the cost of war.¹

This time, Philip listened more seriously. Before, he had been invited to act with the Duke of Guise, and Guise was to have the spoils. Now, at any rate, the operation was to be his own. He bade Santa Cruz send him a plan of operations and a calculation in detail of the ships and stores which would be required. He made him Lord High Admiral, commissioned him to collect squadrons at Cadiz and Lisbon, take them to sea, and act against the English as he saw occasion. He would probably have been allowed his way to do what he pleased in the following year but for a new complication, which threw Philip again into perplexity. The object of any enterprise led by Santa Cruz would have been the execution of the Bull of Pope Pius, the dethronement of Elizabeth, and the transference of the crown to Mary Stuart, who, if placed on the throne by Spanish arms alone, might be relied on to be true to Spanish interests. Wearied out with Mary's perpetual plots, Elizabeth, when Santa Cruz's preparations were far advanced, sent her to the scaffold, and the blow of the axe which ended her disconcerted every arrangement which had been made. There was no longer a Catholic successor in England to whom the crown could go on Elizabeth's deposition, and it was useless to send an army to conquer the country till some purpose could be formed for disposing of it afterwards. Philip had been called King of England once. He was of the blood of the House of Lancaster. He thought, naturally, that if he was to do the work, the prize ought to be his own. Unfortunately, the rest of the world claimed a voice in the matter. France would certainly be hostile. The English Catholics were divided. The Pope himself, when consulted, refused his assent. As Pope Sextus the Fifth, he was bound to desire the reduction of a rebellious island; as an Italian prince, he had no wish to see another wealthy kingdom added to the enormous empire of Spain. Mary Stuart's son was natural heir. He was a Protestant, but gratitude might convert him. At any rate, Philip should not take Elizabeth's place. Sextus was to have given a million crowns to the cost of the armament; he did not directly withdraw his promise, but he haggled with the Spanish Ambassador at the Holy See. He affected to doubt the possibility of Philip's success, and even his personal sincerity. He declined to advance a ducat till a Spanish army was actually on English soil. The Duke of Parma, who was to cross from Flan-

¹ Santa Cruz to Philip the Second, January 13, 1586.

ders and conduct the campaign in England itself, was diffident, if not unwilling; and Philip had to feel that even the successful occupation of London might prove the beginning of greater troubles. He had been driven forward himself against his inclination. The chief movers in the enterprise, those who had fed the fire of religious animosity through Europe, and prevented a rational arrangement between the Spanish and English nations, were the Society of Jesus, those members of it especially who had been bred at Oxford in the Anglican Church, and hated it with the frenzy of renegades. From them came the endless conspiracies which Spain was forced to countenance, and the consequent severities of the English Government, which they shrieked in Philip's ears; and Philip, half a bigot and half a cautious statesman, wavered between two policies till fate decided for him. Both on Philip's part and on Elizabeth's part there was a desire for peace if peace could be had. Philip was weary of the long struggle in the Low Countries, which threatened to be endless if Elizabeth supported it. Elizabeth herself wished to be left in quiet, relieved of the necessity of supporting insurgent Protestants and hanging traitorous priests. An arrangement was possible, based on principles of general toleration.

The Pope was right in not wholly trusting Philip. The Spanish King was willing to agree that England should remain Protestant if England wished it, provided the Catholics were allowed the free exercise of their own religion, and provided Elizabeth would call in her privateers, surrender to him the towns which she held in Holland, and abandon her alliance with the Dutch States. Elizabeth was perfectly ready to tolerate Catholic worship if the Catholics would cease their plots against her and Spain would cease to encourage them. It was true that Flushing and Brill had been trusted to her charge by the States, and that if she withdrew her garrison she was bound in honour to replace them in the States' hands. But she regarded the revolt of the Low Countries as only justified by the atrocities of the Blood Council and the Inquisition. If she could secure for the Dutch Confederation the same toleration which she was willing herself to concede to the English Catholics, she might feel her honour to be acquitted sufficiently if she gave up to Philip towns which really were his own. Here only, so far as the two sovereigns were concerned, the difficulty lay. Philip held himself bound by duty to allow no liberty of religion among his own subjects. But if peace was made the Spanish garrisons were to be withdrawn from the Low Countries; the Executive

Government would be left in the hands of the States themselves, who could be as tolerant practically as they pleased. On these terms it was certain that a general pacification was possible. The Duke of Parma strongly advised it. Philip himself wished for it. Half Elizabeth's Council recommended it, and she herself wished for it. Unless Catholics and Protestants intended to fight till one or other was exterminated, they must come to some such terms at last; and if at last, why not at once? With this purpose a conference was being held at Ostend between Elizabeth's and Parma's commissioners. The terms were rational. The principal parties, it is now possible to see—even Philip himself—were sincere about it. How long the terms of such a peace would have lasted, with the theological furnace at such a heat, may be fairly questioned. Bigotry and freedom of thought had two centuries of battle still before them till it could be seen which was to prevail, but an arrangement might then have been come to at Ostend, in the winter of 1587–8, which would have lasted Philip's and Elizabeth's lifetime, could either party have trusted the other. In both countries there was a fighting party and a peace party. In England it was said that the negotiations were a fraud, designed only to induce Elizabeth to relax her preparations for defence. In Spain it was urged that the larger and more menacing the force which could be collected, the more inclined Elizabeth would be to listen to reason; while Elizabeth had to show on her part that frightened she was not, and that if Philip preferred war she had no objection. The bolder her bearing, the more likely she would be to secure fair terms for the Hollanders.

The preparations at Cadiz and Lisbon were no secret. All Europe was talking of the enormous armament which Spain was preparing, and which Santa Cruz was to convoy to the English Channel. Both the Tagus and Cadiz Harbour were reported to be crowded with ships, though as yet unprovided with crews for them. With some misgivings, but in one of her bolder moments, the Queen in the spring of 1587 allowed Drake to take a flying squadron with him down the Spanish coast. She hung about his neck a second in command to limit his movements; but Drake took his own way, leaving his vice-admiral to go home and complain. He sailed into Cadiz Harbour, burnt eighteen galleons which were lying there, and, remaining leisurely till he had finished his work, sailed away to repeat the operation at Lisbon. It might have been done with the same ease. The English squadron lay at the mouth of the river within sight of Santa Cruz, and the

great admiral had to sit still and fume, unable to go out and meet him *por falta de gente*—for want of sailors to man his galleons. Drake might have gone in and burnt them all, and would have done it had not Elizabeth felt that he had accomplished enough and that the negotiations would be broken off if he worked more destruction. He had singed the King's beard, as he called it; and the King, though patient of affronts, was moved to a passing emotion. Seamen and soldiers were hurried down to the Tagus. Orders were sent to the Admiral to put to sea at once and chase the English off the shore. But Philip, too, on his side was afraid of Santa Cruz's too great audacity. He, too, did not wish for a collision which might make peace impossible. Another order followed. The fleet was to stay where it was and continue its preparations. It was to wait till the next spring, when the enterprise should be undertaken in earnest if the peace conference at Ostend should fail in finding a conclusion.

Thus the winter drove through. Peace was really impossible, however sincerely the high contracting parties might themselves desire it. Public opinion in Spain would have compelled Philip to leave the conqueror of Terceira in command of the expedition. Santa Cruz would have sailed in March for the English Channel, supported by officers whom he had himself trained; and, although the Armada might still have failed, history would have had another tale to tell of its exploits and its fate. But a visible coldness had grown up between the King and the Admiral. Philip, like many men of small minds raised into great positions, had supreme confidence in his own powers of management. He chose to regulate everything, to the diet and daily habits of every sailor and soldier on board. He intended to direct and limit the action of the Armada even when out and gone to its work. He had settled perhaps in his own mind that, since he could not himself be King of England, the happiest result for himself would be to leave Elizabeth where she was, reduced to the condition of his vassal, which she would become if she consented to his terms; and the presence of an overpowering fleet in the Channel, a moderate but not too excessive use of force, an avoidance of extreme and violent measures, which would make the strife internecine and make an arrangement impossible, he conceived it likely would bring Elizabeth to her knees. For such a purpose Santa Cruz was not the most promising instrument; he required some one of more malleable material who would obey his own instructions, and would not be led either by his own ambition

or the enthusiasm and daring of his officers into desperate adventures. It was probably, therefore, rather to his relief than regret that in February, when the Armada was almost ready to sail, the old Admiral died at Lisbon. He was seventy-three years old. He had seen fifty years of service. Spanish tradition, mourning at the fatal consequence, said afterwards that he had been broken-hearted at the King's hesitation. Anxiety for the honour of his country might have worn out a younger man. He went, and with him went the only chance of a successful issue of the expedition. He was proud of his country, which he saw that Philip was degrading. The invasion of England had been his dream for years, and he had correspondents of his own in England and Ireland. He was the ablest seaman that Spain possessed, and had studied long the problems with which he would have had to deal. Doubtless he had left men behind among those who had served under him who could have taken his place, and have done almost as well. But Philip had determined that, since the experiment was to be made, he would himself control it from his room in the Escorial, and in his choice of Santa Cruz's successor he showed that naval capacity and patriotic enthusiasm were the last qualities for which he was looking.

Don Alonzo de Guzman, Duke of Medina Sidonia, was the richest peer in Spain. He was now thirty-eight years old, and his experience as a public man was limited to his failure to defend Cadiz against Drake. He was a short, broad-shouldered, olive-complexioned man, said to be a good rider; but if his wife was to be believed, he was of all men in Spain the least fitted to be trusted with the conduct of any critical undertaking. The Duchess, Doña Aña de Mendoza was the daughter of Philip's Minister, Ruy Gomez, and of the celebrated Princess of Eboli, whom later scandal called Philip's mistress, and whose influence was supposed to have influenced Philip in favour of her son-in-law. Royal scandals are dreary subjects. When they are once uttered the stain is indelible, for everyone likes to believe them. The only contemporary witness for the amours of Philip and the Princess of Eboli is Antonio Perez, who, by his own confession, was a scoundrel who deserved the gallows. Something is known at last of the history of the lady. If there was a woman in Spain whom Philip detested, it was the wife of Ruy Gomez. If there was a man whom the Princess despised, it was the watery-blooded King. An intrigue between a wild cat of the mountain and a narrow-minded, conscientious sheep-dog would be about as

probable as a love-affair between Philip and the Princess of Eboli; and at the time of her son-in-law's appointment she was locked up in a castle in defiant disgrace. The Duke had been married to her daughter when he was twenty-two and his bride was eleven, and Doña Aña, after sixteen years' experience of him, had observed to her friends that he was well enough in his own house among persons who did not know what he was; but that if he was employed on business of State the world would discover to its cost his real character. That such a man should have been chosen to succeed Alonzo de Bazan astonished everyone. A commander of Gold, it was said, was taking the place of a commander of Iron. The choice was known to Santa Cruz while he still breathed, and did not comfort him in his departure.

The most astonished of all, when he learnt the honour which was intended for him, was the Duke himself, and he drew a picture of his own incapacity as simple as Sancho's when appointed to govern his island.

'My health is bad,' he wrote to Philip's secretary, 'and from my small experience of the water I know that I am always sea-sick. I have no money which I can spare. I owe a million ducats, and I have not a real to spend on my outfit. The expedition is on such a scale and the object is of such high importance that the person at the head of it ought to understand navigation and sea-fighting, and I know nothing of either. I have not one of those essential qualifications. I have no acquaintances among the officers who are to serve under me. Santa Cruz had information about the state of things in England; I have none. Were I competent otherwise, I should have to act in the dark by the opinion of others, and I cannot tell to whom I may trust. The Adelantado of Castile would do better than I. Our Lord would help him, for he is a good Christian and has fought in naval battles. If you send me, depend upon it I shall have a bad account to render of my trust.'¹

The Duchess perhaps guided her husband's hand when he wrote so faithful an account of himself. But his vanity was flattered. Philip persisted that he must go. He and only he would answer the purpose in view, so he allowed himself to be persuaded.

'Since your Majesty still desires it, after my confession of incompetence,' he wrote to Philip, 'I will try to deserve your confi-

¹ Medina Sidonia to Secretary Idriaquez, Feb. 16, 1588. Duro, vol. i. p. 414.

dence. As I shall be doing God's work, I may hope that He will help me.'

Philip gratefully replied : ' You are sacrificing yourself for God's service and mine. I am so anxious, that if I was less occupied at home I would accompany the fleet myself and I should be certain that all would go well. Take heart ; you have now an opportunity of showing the extraordinary qualities which God, the author of all good, has been pleased to bestow upon you. Happen what may, I charge myself with the care of your children. If you fail, you fail ; but the cause being the cause of God, you will not fail.'

Thus the Duke was to command the Armada and to sail at the earliest possible moment, for the Commissioners were sitting at Ostend, and his presence in the Channel was of pressing consequence. Santa Cruz besides had fixed on the end of March as the latest date for the departure, on account of the north winds which later in the season blow down the coast of Portugal. The Duke at the time of his nomination was at his house at San Lucar. He was directed to repair at once to Lisbon, where his commission would reach him. An experienced but cautious Admiral, Don Diego Flores de Valdez, was assigned to him as nautical adviser, and Philip proceeded to inflict upon him a series of instructions and advice as wise and foolish as those with which Don Quixote furnished his squire. Every day brought fresh letters as suggestions rose in what Philip called his mind. Nothing was too trifling for his notice, nothing was to be left to the Duke's discretion which could possibly be provided for. In a secret despatch to the Duke of Parma, the King revealed alike his expectations and his wishes. He trusted that the appearance of the Armada and some moderate victory over the English fleet would force Elizabeth to an agreement. If the Catholic religion could be tolerated in England, and if Flushing and Brill were given up to him, he said that he was prepared to be satisfied. To Medina Sidonia he reported as his latest advice from England that the Queen was inclining to the treaty, but was dissuaded by Leicester and Walsingham, and he gave him a list of the English force which he might expect to meet, which was tolerably accurate and far inferior to his own.

So far he wrote like a responsible and sensible prince, but the smallest thing and the largest seemed to occupy him equally. He directed the Duke to provide himself with competent Channel pilots, as if this was a point which might be overlooked. It laid

down regulations for the health of the crews, the allowances of biscuit and wine, salt fish and bacon. Beyond all, the Duke was to attend to their morals. They were in the service of the Lord, and the Lord must not be offended by the faults of His instruments. The clergy throughout Spain were praying for them and would continue to pray, but soldiers and sailors must do their part and live like Christians. They must not swear; they must not gamble, which led to swearing. If they used low language God would be displeased. Every man before he embarked must confess and commend himself to the Lord. Especially and pre-eminently, loose women must be kept away, and if any member of the expedition fell into the *pecado nefando* he must be chastised to the example of the rest. Returning to secular subjects, he had heard, the King said, that the gentlemen adventurers wanted state-rooms and private berths. It would encumber the ships, and the Duke was cautioned not to allow it. As the Duke knew nothing of navigation, here, too, the King held himself competent to instruct. He was to make straight for the English Channel, advance to the North Foreland, and put himself in communication with Parma. If foul weather came and the ships were scattered, they were to collect again, first at Finisterre, and then at the Scilly Isles. In the Channel he must keep on the English side, because the water was deeper there. Elizabeth's fleet, Philip understood, was divided, part being under Drake at Plymouth, and part in the Straits of Dover. If the Duke fell in with Drake he was to take no notice of him unless he was attacked, and was to keep on his course. If he found the two squadrons united, he would still be in superior force and might join battle, being careful to keep to windward.

There were limits even to Philip's confidence in his ability to guide. He admitted that he could not direct the Duke specifically how to form the ships for an engagement. Time and opportunity would have to determine. 'Only,' he said, 'omit no advantage and so handle the fleet that one part shall support another. The enemy will try to fight at a distance with his guns. You will endeavour to close. You will observe that their practice is to shoot low into the hulls rather than into the rigging. You will find how to deal with this. Keep your vessels together, allow none to stray or go in advance. Do not let them hurry in pursuit of prizes after a victory. This fault has often caused disaster both on sea and land. Conquer first, and then you will have spoil enough. The Council of War will order the distribution of it. What I

am now saying implies that a battle will have to be fought ; but if the enemy can be got rid of without an action, so much the better. The effect will be produced without loss to yourself. Should the Prince be able to cross, you will remain with the Armada at the mouth of the Thames, lending such assistance as you can. Consult with the Prince, and land none of your forces without his approval. Remember that your only business is to fight at sea. Differences between leaders are injurious, and always to be avoided. I am confident that you will co-operate cordially with the Prince as my service demands ; but I must charge you to follow these injunctions of mine strictly according to the exact words. I have similarly directed the Prince on his own conduct, and if you two acting together can succeed in your undertaking, there will be honour to spare for both of you. You will remain at the Thames' mouth till the work is done. You may then, if the Prince approves, take in hand Ireland, in which case you will leave your Spanish troops with him and exchange them for Germans and Italians. You will be careful in what you spend. You know how costly the Armada has been to me. You will also see that I am not cheated in the muster rolls, and that the provisions are sound and sufficient. You will watch the conduct of the officers and keep them attentive to their duties.

'This is all which occurs to me at present. I must leave the rest to your own care and prudence, and for any further advices which I may have to send you.'¹

Much of all this was no doubt reasonable and true. But Generals chosen to conduct great enterprises do not require to be taught the elements of their duties. That Philip thought it necessary to write all these details was characteristic both of himself and of the Duke. The special commission was to cover the crossing of the Duke of Parma by defeating or dispersing the English fleet ; but it was possible that the English fleet might not be so easily got rid of, and that Parma could not cross, in which case, by a second secret instruction, the Duke was told that he might take possession of the Isle of Wight and fortify it. But this was only an alternative in case of failure at the North Foreland, and in no case was to be attempted on his first advance. It was to be hoped that God would make the cause His own, however, and that there would be no need of any secondary expedients. If the negotiations failed at Ostend, and if Parma succeeded in effecting a landing, he was to advance to London and take possession of

¹ Philip the Second to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, April 1. Duro, vol. ii. pp. 5-13.

the Government, Cardinal Allen inviting the English nobility to join in restoring the Church. But to Parma himself were given instructions, also secret, of a more temperate kind, which the Duke was to deliver to him. If the Armada won a battle, or if the enemy feared to encounter it, he was to pass over with his army in the name of God and carry out the purpose agreed upon. Should the success, however, be less complete, and should he think peace desirable, he would use the presence of the fleet to enforce favourable conditions. It was indispensable that the Catholics should be allowed their services and the ports in Holland be restored. He might demand compensation for past injuries, but this might be sacrificed if he could obtain religious liberty for the English Catholics. He might argue that the Huguenots were tolerated in France, and if it was answered that they were not tolerated in Flanders, he might say that the case was different. He might demand hostages also, and retain certain fortified positions on the coast to be held for a number of years, till it could be seen how things would go. In that case the Isle of Wight might be useful, as the Armada could lie in the Solent.

Disaster it is evident that Philip did not anticipate. Something less than complete success he probably did anticipate, and on the whole might prefer it. Satisfied with having provided for all contingencies, he was now only anxious to see the Armada on its way; while the nuns and hermits had removed the alarms of Medina Sidonia, had convinced him that God could not neglect a business in which He was so peculiarly concerned, and that, in the fine language of theological knight-errantry, the service which he was to execute had been specially reserved by Providence for the King to achieve.¹

Such thoughts and such experiences were doubtless indications of a high-wrought frame of mind; but men may dwell too exclusively on the conviction that God is on their side, and perhaps forget that God will not be found there if they neglect to do their own parts. While the priests were praying and the King and the Duke were calculating on the Divine assistance, they were omitting, all of them, the most obvious precautions by which moderate success could be looked for. Santa Cruz had reported that the fleet was almost ready to sail. The stores of provisions had been laid in while he was still alive, and the water-casks had

¹ 'Y que lo tiene guardado á V. Md. para que por su mano y con su gran zelo y christiandad, se reduzca aquel Regno al gremio y obediencia de su Iglesia.' Medina Sidonia to Philip, April 11.

been filled. But after his death there was no responsible person left in Lisbon who had exerted himself to see to anything. Great naval expeditions were nothing new in Spain. The West Indies and Mexico and Peru had not been conquered by men in their sleep; and what ships and ships' crews required for dangerous voyages was as well understood at Lisbon and Cadiz as in any harbour in the world. But the Armada was surrounded by a halo of devout imagination which seemed to paralyse all ordinary sense. It was to have sailed in March, but, even to the inexperienced eye of Medina Sidonia when he arrived at his command, the inadequacy of the preparations was too obvious. The casks of salt meat were found to be putrefying; the water in the tanks had not been renewed, and had stood for weeks, growing foul and poisonous under the hot Lisbon sun. Spare rope, spare spars, spare anchors—all were deficient. The powder-supply was short. The balls were short. The contractors had cheated as audaciously as if they had been mere heretics, and the soldiers and mariners so little liked the look of things that they were deserting in hundreds, while the muster-masters drew pay for the full numbers and kept it. Instead of sailing in March, as he had been ordered, the Duke was obliged to send to Madrid a long list of indispensable necessities, without which he could not sail at all. Nothing had been attended to save the state of the men's souls, about which the King had been so peculiarly anxious. They had been sent to confession, had received each his ticket certifying that he had been absolved and had duly commended himself to the Lord. The loose women had been sent away, the cards and dice prohibited, the moral instructions punctually complied with. All the rest had been left to chance and villainy. The short powder-supply was irremediable. The Duke purchased a few casks from merchant ships, but no more was to be had. For the rest, the King wrote letters, and the Duke, according to his own account, worked like a slave, and the worst defects were concealed if not supplied. Not, however, till the end of April were the conditions advanced sufficiently for the presentation of the standard, and even then the squadron from Andalusia had not arrived.

All was finished at last, or at any rate seemed so. The six squadrons were assembled under their respective commanders. Men and officers were on board, and sailing orders, addressed to every member of the expedition, were sent round, in the Duke's name, to the several ships, which, remembering the fate to which all these men were being consigned by their crusading enthusiasm, we cannot read without emotion.

'From highest to lowest you are to understand the object of our expedition, which is to recover countries to the Church now oppressed by the enemies of the true faith. I therefore beseech you to remember your calling, so that God may be with us in what we do. I charge you, one and all, to abstain from profane oaths dishonouring to the names of our Lord, our Lady, and the Saints. All personal quarrels are to be suspended while the expedition lasts, and for a month after it is completed. Neglect of this will be held as treason. Each morning at sunrise the ship boys, according to custom, shall sing "Good Morrow" at the foot of the mainmast,¹ and at sunset the "Ave Maria." Since bad weather may interrupt the communications, the watchword is laid down for each day in the week:—Sunday, Jesus; the days succeeding, the Holy Ghost, the Holy Trinity, Santiago, the Angels, All Saints, and our Lady. At sea, every evening, each ship shall pass with a salute under the lee of the Commander-in-Chief, and shall follow at night the light which he will carry in his stern.'

So, as it were, singing their own dirge, the doomed Armada went upon its way, to encounter the arms and the genius of the new era, unequally matched with unbelievers. On May 14 it dropped down the river to Belem, and lay there waiting for a wind. A brief account may here be given of its composition and its chieftains. The fleet consisted of a hundred and thirty ships. Seven of them were over a thousand tons and sixty-seven over five hundred. They carried two thousand five hundred guns, chiefly small, however—four, six, and nine-pounders. Spanish seamen understood little of gunnery. Their art in their sea-battles was to close and grapple and trust to their strength and courage in hand-to-hand fighting. Large for the time as the galleons were, they were still overcrowded. Soldiers, sailors, officers, volunteers, priests, surgeons, galley slaves, amounted, according to the returns, to nearly thirty thousand men. The soldiers were the finest in Europe; the seamen old trained hands, who had learnt their trade under Santa Cruz. They were divided into six squadrons, each with its Vice-Admiral and Capitana, or flag-ship. The Duke carried his standard in the *San Martin*, of the squadron of Portugal, the finest vessel in the service, and, as the Spaniards thought, in the world. The other five, of Biscay, Castile, Andalusia, Guypuscoa, and the Levant, were led by distinguished officers.

¹ 'Los pajes segun es costumbre davan los buenos dias al pié del mástil mayor.'

perate, especially of the water, that it was held unsafe to proceed. The pilots said that they must put into some port for a fresh supply. The Duke feared that if he consented the men, in their present humour, would take the opportunity and desert.

At length, on June 10, after three weeks of ineffectual beating up and down, the wind shifted to the south-west, and the fleet could be laid upon its course. The anxiety was not much diminished. The salt meat, salt fish, and cheese were found so foul throughout that they were thrown overboard for fear of pestilence, and the rations were reduced to biscuit and weevils. A despatch was hurried off to Philip that fresh stores must instantly be sent out, or there would be serious disaster. The water was the worst of all, as when drunk it produced instant dysentery. On June 13 matters mended a little. The weather had cooled. The south-west wind had brought rain. The ships could be aired and purified. They were then off Finisterre, and were on a straight course for the Channel. Philip's orders had been so positive that they were not to delay anywhere, that they were to hurry on and must not separate. They had five hundred men, however, down with dysentery, and the number of sick was increasing with appalling rapidity. A council was held on board the *San Martin*, and the Admirals all agreed that go on they could not. Part of the fleet, at least, must make into Ferrol, land the sick, and bring off supplies. The Duke could not come to a resolution, but the winds and waves settled his uncertainties. On the 19th it came on to blow. The Duke, with the Portugal squadron, the galleys and the larger galleons made in at once for Corunna, leaving the rest to follow, and was under shelter before the worst of the gale. The rest were caught outside and scattered. They came in as they could, most of them in the next few days, some dismasted, some leaking with strained timbers, the crews exhausted with illness; but at the end of a week a third part of the Armada was still missing, and those which had reached the harbour were scarcely able to man their yards. A hospital had to be established on shore. The tendency to desert had become so general that the landing-places were occupied with bodies of soldiers. A despatch went off to the Escorial, with a despairing letter from the Duke to the King.

'The weather,' he said, 'though in June, is as wild as in December. No one remembers such a season. It is the more strange since we are on the business of the Lord, and some reason there must be for what has befallen us. I told your Majesty that

I was unfit for this command when you asked me to undertake it. I obeyed your orders, and now I am here in Corunna with the ships dispersed and the force remaining to me inferior to the enemy. The crews are sick, and grow daily worse from bad food and water. Most of our provisions have perished, and we have not enough for more than two months' consumption. Much depends on the safety of this fleet. You have exhausted your resources to collect it, and if it is lost you may lose Portugal and the Indies. The men are out of spirit. The officers do not understand their business. We are no longer strong. Do not deceive yourself into thinking that we are equal to the work before us. You remember how much it cost you to conquer Portugal, a country adjoining Castile, where half the inhabitants were in your favour. We are now going against a powerful kingdom with only the weak force of the Prince of Parma and myself. I speak freely, but I have laid the matter before the Lord; you must decide yourself what is to be done. Recollect only how many there are who envy your greatness and bear you no goodwill.¹

On the 27th thirty-five ships were still absent, and nothing had been heard of them. The storm after all had not been especially severe, and it was not likely that they were lost. The condition to which the rest were reduced was due merely to rascally contractors and official negligence, and all could easily be repaired by an efficient commander in whom the men had confidence. But the Duke had no confidence in himself nor the officers in him. Four weeks only had passed since he had left Lisbon and he was already despondent, and his disquieted subordinates along with him. He had written freely to Philip, and advised that the expedition should be abandoned. He again summoned the Vice-Admirals to his cabin and required their opinions. Should they or should they not go forward with their reduced force? The Inspector-General, Don George Manrique, produced a schedule of numbers. They were supposed, he said, to have twenty-eight thousand men besides the galley-slaves. Owing to sickness and other causes, not more than twenty-two or twenty-three thousand could be regarded as effective, and of these six thousand were in the missing galleons. The Vice-Admirals were less easily frightened than their leader. None were for giving up. Most of them advised that they should wait where they were till the ships came in, repairing damages and taking in fresh stores. Pedro de

¹ Medina Sidonia to Philip the Second from Corunna, June 24.

health and good-humour they were again commended to the Lord. Tents were set up on an island in the harbour, with an altar in each and friars in sufficient number to officiate. The ships' companies were landed and brought up man by man till the whole of them had again confessed and again received the Sacrament.

'This,' said the Duke, 'is great riches, and the most precious jewel which I carry with me. They are now all well, and content, and cheerful.'

J. A. FROUDE.

To be continued.)

Valdez insisted that they should go on as they were; while they remained in harbour fresh meat and vegetables might be served out, and the crews would soon recover from a sickness which was caused only by bad food. With vigour and energy all that was wrong could be set right. The missing ships were doubtless ahead expecting them, and would be fallen in with somewhere.

Don Pedro was addressing brave men, and carried the council along with him. He wrote himself to Philip to tell him what had passed. 'The Duke,' he said, 'bore him no goodwill for his advice, but he intended to persist in a course which he believed to be for his Majesty's honour.'

A day or two later the wanderers came back and restored the Duke's courage. Some had been as far as Scilly, some even in Mount's Bay, but none had been lost and none had been seriously injured. The fresh meat was supplied as Don Pedro advised. The sick recovered; not one died, and all were soon in health again. Fresh supplies were poured down out of the country. The casks were refilled with pure water. In short, the sun began to shine again, and the despondency fit passed away. Philip wrote kindly and cheerily. Everything would be furnished which they could want. The Duke might spend money freely and need spare nothing to feed the men as they ought to be fed. If they had met with difficulties in the beginning, they would have greater glory in the end. There were difficulties in every enterprise. They must overcome them and go on. The Duke still hesitated. He said truly enough that other things were wanting besides food: powder, cordage, and the thousand minor stores which ought to have been provided and were not. But all the rest were now in heart again, and he found himself alone; Recalde only, like a wise man, begging Philip to modify his instructions and allow him to secure Plymouth or Dartmouth on their advance, as, although they might gain a victory, it was unlikely to be so complete as to end the struggle, and they might require a harbour to shelter the fleet.

Philip, unfortunately for himself, paid no attention to Recalde's suggestion, but only urged them to begone at their best speed. The ships were laid on shore to be scraped and tallowed. The gaps in the crews were filled up with fresh recruits. Another ship was added, and at the final muster there were a hundred and thirty-one vessels, between seven and eight thousand sailors and seventeen thousand infantry, two thousand slaves, and fourteen hundred officers, priests, gentlemen, and servants. With restored

health and good-humour they were again commended to the Lord. Tents were set up on an island in the harbour, with an altar in each and friars in sufficient number to officiate. The ships' companies were landed and brought up man by man till the whole of them had again confessed and again received the Sacrament.

'This,' said the Duke, 'is great riches, and the most precious jewel which I carry with me. They are now all well, and content, and cheerful.'

J. A. FROUDE.

To be continued.)

Fiat.

A BIRD from far,
 A morning star,
 A league of waste from a cottage door,
 A purling stream,
 A sunset gleam—
 Here is my kingdom—I ask no more.

.

Softly go,
 Kind-dealing Snow,
 And wrap the crocus from the cold :
 For Spring's advance,
 Through sufferance,
 Has grown a little over-bold.

Yet even this
 A lesson is :
 For, hear the thrush—a morning wraith :
 ' The sun, I see
 From my tall tree,
 Has lit the border ! Where is faith ?'

The snow is gone.
 O bird ! sing on ;
 Sing all thy numbers o'er again :
 So that each air
 The burden bear
 Of ' Love—love—love—the dearest pain !'

For winter breath
And winter death
The constant sum and impulse ask
Of life re-blest
In flower and nest ;
And Love is bending to the task.

In dust and air,
And everywhere,
The little gentle populace,
Beneath the spell
Of one clear bell,
Is instinct with sublimest grace.

In harp of earth,
In hymn of birth,
The throbbing tones swell wide and high,
To wake one mood,
One tidal flood,
From bourne to bourne, of ecstasy.

.

A bird from far,
A single star,
A sound of love at a cottage door ;
And gentleness
For all distress—
Here is a kingdom prepared for the poor.

AUDYN BATTYE.

West North West.

THERE was a road leading out of the city as nearly as possible in that direction, which if you followed far enough—for seventy miles, in fact—you would come to the small town where my cousin Christopher lived, before his health broke down and his father lost all his money in speculation. Chris had always been delicate, but no one thought very seriously of it, till he had this fearful illness when his life was despaired of; and, though he recovered more or less, as consumptive people sometimes do, he only got better to find that his father was a bankrupt, and that he himself must work while he could, rather than be a burden on his family.

So, hearing of a young fellow in Merton—our great manufacturing city—who wanted a private tutor, Chris came to coach him and to board with us: for we were a large family, and mother said we could do it as cheaply for him as he would be likely to do it anywhere else, and put by something into the bargain. Not that we should have wanted to gain by having Chris, if we had had money enough of our own; but then we never had. There were so many of us, and father only earned 130*l.* a year; and mother was an invalid, and the lodgers were continually coming to grief in some way that compelled them to leave without settling their accounts. And the younger ones were still at school; and Bob only earned ten shillings a week, and Arthur had a scholarship at Oxford that was never enough to keep him, and Milly, our show-card, as we called her, would not take a situation, or do anything whatever but get engaged to one young man after another, each worse than the last. She really monopolised the drawing-room with having them to afternoon tea—which we could not afford. But it did not matter about the drawing-room, for that was horrible, with an old grand piano whose lid was loose, and with walls that crumbled and let the nails out, so that the brackets tumbled down on

people's heads—but mother would have them put up again. And there was always a dreadful atmosphere of hearthrugs and old anti-macassars. Then Harriet, our one servant, had no time to dust, and I could only dust the drawing-room properly once a week : there were so many other things to do, and the soot was so trying. There could be no place on the earth grimmer than Merton. We had the chimneys swept as often as we could afford it ; but it seemed to me that other people never swept theirs at all, and, as soon as the windows were opened the soot came in, darkening the air like the plague of locusts, and settling down over everything that was just scrubbed clean, till one felt as if one could lie down and die. The fogs were full of it—you never saw such substantial fogs. Chris said once that they were meat and drink to him ; and they happened every other day. And what with soot, and fogs, and mother's neuralgia, and Milly's engagements, and a family of nine—life was not life ; but it was still less existence. It was one long scramble.

I felt sorry beforehand for Chris, knowing how different things had been for him a year ago, when he did not know that he would never be strong again, or that his father had speculated away everything. I knew he was not accustomed to a house like ours, and I knew that if I did not look after him a little, nobody would. It seemed likely that Milly would not even flirt with him, because he was consumptive : at least, she had asked already whether it was catching, and said that it would be funereal to have him in the house. So I made his room as nice as I could—it was the attic next mine. It had not been repapered for years, because we said the walls were damp. They were not really, but we had no money. Still, it looked clean when I had done—I remember standing still, and watching a great flake of soot that was hovering in through the window, in an undecided way—and I even got some nasturtiums out of the back garden and put them in a vase. They were dingy, like everything else, but they looked green and yellow, and better than nothing.

I remember I had only just done when Chris came, and was shown into the drawing-room. Mother and Milly were there : mother had neuralgia and Milly had a cold ; and though it was a warm day the fire was lit, and they were sitting over it, and would not have the window open. When I came down I found them all there, and mother was telling Chris about her neuralgia. He looked flushed just then, not like a person who could not live long, to me, and so bright and resolute. I liked his face very much ;

but I saw that the drawing-room was giving him a dreadful headache—and no wonder. So I ran downstairs and made the tea.

Chris and I were friends directly. I don't know how it was, for I very seldom make friends, and all the young men who come to the house go straight to Milly like iron filings to a magnet. But it was different with Chris, because the drawing-room made his head ache, just as it did mine; and when we knew each other better we found that we liked the same things and people—though he knew far more than I did, and never grew bitter against anyone, like me. He had such a fearless, friendly way with the world; and yet there were only a very few people he altogether trusted and relied on; and I was one of them. I know he trusted me completely, or he would never have told me about Pauline.

Partly, indeed, I guessed it. For we fell into a way of going walks together on Saturday afternoons, when Chris had some spare time and I made it, and I found out that he liked this particular road—the road running West North West. It was such a stupid road. First it led through a long street of those miserable thin grey houses that look like gravestones standing upright, and then came streets full of public-houses, and wretched little sweet-shops with halfpenny ices, and tobacconists', and 'boots mended while you wait.' Then there was a dismal triangular bit of common, with a fence on one side all over placards, and then a red brick Primitive chapel, and more respectable houses—till at last came real fields. You could not call it country where there were always cabbage-leaves and bits of broken pots, and clothes hung out to dry. But generally at this stage we turned back.

I soon concluded that it was the way to Chris's old home; but I guessed more than that. For people do not always like to walk in the direction of a particular place only because they have lived most of their life there. There must be something or someone there now that they like to fancy themselves nearer. And by and by, when Chris saw that I guessed, he told me the whole. There was very little of it, as he said cheerily.

It was just as I thought. The girl he loved had lived there, was living there still—and her name was Pauline. She was rich, he said, and very beautiful. He told me what she was like, and I could not help knowing that I should have loved her, that anyone must have done. And Chris had lost everything at once—money, and health, and hope.

'It wouldn't have mattered about the money,' said Chris, in his quaint way, 'I would have asked her to wait for me, and

worked my way up. It would have been a very good thing. But you can't ask a girl to wait for you when you find you have only one lung.'

He laughed rather ruefully, and I laughed too, though something caught my breath.

'Did the doctor give no hope?' I asked.

'If I had gone abroad at once,' said Chris, 'but I couldn't do that. So I thought, as there might be a year or two, I might as well do something for my living. And this turned up.'

'Did she,' I said tentatively, 'know you liked her?'

Chris flushed a little, and looked away, but not before I had seen a sudden light in his eyes.

'I never told her,' he answered simply. 'They say—women know.'

'And she—did you—was she—I mean, were you ——'

His flush deepened.

'It was too early in the day,' he said. 'I sometimes thought—if it had gone on—but it didn't go on. I have prayed about it. Not very enthusiastically, perhaps—but it is a good prayer. And there's another fellow in the running—a remarkably good fellow. I think it will be all right.'

I did not answer. It seemed all wrong to me. He had told me the story on one of our Saturday afternoon walks; and when it was ended we still walked on—West North West. It seemed as if we were walking on and on to a place where our roads would divide for ever, and then I knew what a blank there would be for one of us.

I could not pray his prayer, I would have liked to alter everything. Yet I hardly dared wish that Pauline loved him—I understood him so well. I think that, though he loved her a thousand times better, she could hardly have understood him much better than I. But anyone called Pauline it must be good enough only to worship and strew roses for, like the man in Browning. Well, I would have gathered her bushels of roses, but I thought she might write to Chris. She never wrote—of course he had not written to her; but when he was so ill it seemed hard all the same. Still, he went on working, and kept up wonderfully through the summer, though with autumn his cough grew terribly bad, and the winter, that everyone said would be so trying, was very near. But on Saturdays we still had our walks, and still went the old way—till West North West grew to be a watchword between us for all that we wanted and could not get. We seldom said it without a laugh; but there is no one but me who knows the meaning of it now.

It was one Saturday in October that Chris came in with a letter in his hand. I knew before he told me what the news was, from something in his face. Pauline was to be married in November—to the other fellow.

'My prayer has really been answered,' he said, a little restlessly, 'in six months. And now I want to buy a wedding-present—that is all that remains to be done. You'll come with me, won't you, Janet?'

I nodded, and we went. Chris was very bright and eager about buying that wedding-present—rather too bright, perhaps, when one saw the restless look in his eyes. We went from place to place, and at last found an exquisite little flower-vase that took his fancy, though it cost far more than he ought to have afforded. I fancied he must often have taken her flowers.

'I shall not send my name,' Chris decided, when his gift was packed up, and even addressed. 'But I think she will know.'

I *knew* she would know.

'Now let us take the road,' said Chris, laughing, when his parcel was sent off—and I knew which road he meant. I could walk it in the dark. I think if I had only one inch of strength left I would choose to walk there till I died. We took an omnibus and went rather farther out than usual. Chris was very bright and brotherly—rather in an absent way, and seemed bent on showing me that he was not downhearted. But we talked of other things, never of Pauline.

We had tea at a little shop 'really in the country,' as Chris said hopefully. I think they took us for brother and sister. It was a very pleasant shopwoman; she had a little girl with a round, ruddy face, and very light hair, who made friends with Chris at once, as children always did, and he gave her a bright new sixpence, for which I shook my head at him. We had tea at a small round table by the front kitchen fire, rather than in the cold, deserted room where they had visitors in the summer. It was so warm and comfortable, and Chris liked the warmth, though he could eat little. When tea was done we still sat there five minutes by the fire, chatting quietly. Perhaps it was because a crisis was over and one could breathe more freely; perhaps it was because he knew the vase would please her; but I think those few moments were pleasant, even to Chris. Sometimes his face comes up before me as clearly as possible, with the firelight on it—though I cannot recall it when I try.

Then we set out to walk back. All the way there the wind

had been with us and we had hardly felt it, but now we met it full. It was a bitter wind ; and before we had left the shop ten minutes a driving sleet began. We walked two miles before we could get an omnibus. Chris thought lightly of it, of course, and was only anxious for me—as if *I* could have been hurt ! Death is for people like Chris. I try to forget that walk home, and go back to where we sat in the firelight ; but I dream of the other sometimes, and the sleet is in our faces again, and I know it is killing him, and wake myself with calling out. . . . Very well ; that is all over. The doctor said that perhaps it made no real difference : what happened then might have happened any day in the state Chris was in. It was an hour after we reached home, and he was coughing terribly—he broke a blood-vessel. But he lived for two days, and I nursed him to the end : he wanted no one else. He said I was a good nurse, but I knew my hands were very hard and rough with housework. I did pray that I might lose the use of them for ever if God would only make them cool and soft till Chris died—but I suppose that would have been a miracle. Chris did not mind, he was very grateful, and said he should certainly meet me again. He had always so much faith. A little before he died he smiled, and said he was going West North West.

That is three years ago ; and I am glad now. For the summers seem to be growing shorter and shorter, and the winters longer—there is a great deal of distress everywhere, and I am glad he is away, for while he lived he would always have taken the hardest part. But sometimes in the spring and summer there are very lovely days, and then I wish he were back. It is rather like living in a vacuum, where one can't draw a long breath because there is no air ; but all that will pass over. Milly is married at last to someone very rich ; but there are all the others, and the soot is worse than ever, and new things are always turning up to be done. I am thankful for that. I should like every hour and minute to be filled quite full—till I go West North West.

MAY KENDALL.

Across the Kalahari Desert to the Botletli River, N'Gamiland.

IT is no light matter to equip and start upon a shooting and exploring expedition in the wilderness, and it was not till June 19 last year, after lingering for a week at Khama's new town—Palachwe—that we were ready to trek.

In waggon-travel there are so many things to be done at the last moment—servants to be collected, corn procured for the horses, oxen, slaughter-goats and sheep to be got together, and such like. The Pioneer Column for Mashonaland had just preceded us, creating a dearth quite unexampled in these regions, and we had the greatest difficulty to obtain sufficient Kaffir corn and mealies to feed our nags to the Lake River. Khama, as usual, came to the rescue and exerted himself in every possible way to assist us, providing us with his best hunters and servants, oxen, &c., and helping us in innumerable ways. Every morning early his pleasant kindly face appeared at our camp, and the last thing in the evening he usually rode up to see how things were progressing. The chief took the greatest interest in our expedition, sending us to his best hunting 'veldt,' which, owing to fear of Matabele troubles, had been little disturbed by his people for two years. I don't think there can ever be another native chief quite like this modest, disinterested, brave, Christian man, truly one of nature's real gentlefolk. Mr. Hepburn, the resident missionary, and others also rendered us much assistance.

Three of us set forth upon the journey, Messrs. W. Mackay, W. Dove, and myself. Our outfit consisted of two waggons, drawn respectively by eighteen and sixteen oxen, nine hunting-ponies, including one knowing old veteran belonging to Khama, used by our principal hunter, two pointers, a greyhound and some useful waggon-dogs, and a couple of goats and a sheep to be used for slaughter pur-

poses till the game was reached. Of these last, the sheep refused to trek, and, being carried on Dove's waggon, broke his leg the first night and had to be forthwith devoured. Thanks to the supply of game, one of the goats was never eaten, and found his way back with us to Khama's, trekking merrily with the waggons and often amusing us with his absurd ways and antics.

For servants we had two of Khama's best hunters—David, a Batlapin, and Patshalaan, a Bamangwato, who also acted as drivers—two leaders, two horse-boys, a cook and hunter, named Joseph, who spoke English, Dutch, and Sechuana and acted as interpreter, and a small fat Makalaka named Meti. This last, a boy of eleven or twelve, interviewed Mackay and insisted upon accompanying us, and, having obtained Khama's consent, we took him. 'Piccanin,' as he was always called, acted as cook's help and bottle-washer, and being a ready, active little chap, became a most popular member of the 'trek.' It was Piccanin's black good-humoured face that appeared to us at dawn, as he drew aside the canvas 'foreclap' of the waggon and handed us our early morning coffee, and it was 'Piccanin' who always picked out a hot ember from the fire for our pipe-lights, and performed other innumerable acts of service for us.

It was not till we had been on the road for a day or two that we had shaken down and got things ship-shape in the waggons. Let me picture the interior of these desert-ships. At the bottom are disposed all the heavy goods—cases of ammunition, tinned vegetables, fruits, jams, baking-powder, and other necessary stores, as well as trading articles for barter, bags of meal, corn, coffee, sugar, &c. As these things disappear their places are taken by hides, horns, heads, and other trophies of the chase. Above these stores is slung the kartel, a wooden framework just fitting the waggon, laced crosswise with strips of hide, so as to form a most comfortable bed. A mattress or blankets placed on the kartel and another blanket and sheepskin kaross as coverlet, provide one with as roomy and comfortable a bed as the traveller can desire. Round the sides of the waggon interior are nailed ample canvas pockets, which contain field-glasses, pipes, tobacco, cigarettes, knives, sewing-materials, matches, curios, books, candles, and innumerable other odds and ends. Above the kartel is suspended from the waggon-roof a lantern, so that, if minded, one may read in bed at night, when the waggons are outspanned. At one side rest on carefully padded hooks a rifle and shot-gun; on the other side are other rifles

fastened to the framework of the waggon-tilt by 'reims' of hide. Cartridge-belts, a long stalking-glass, and other adjuncts, hang here and there. Dove occupied the smaller half-tent waggon, Mackay and I had two kartels fixed in the big hunting-waggon, but as 'Mac' had, most unfortunately, to leave us a few days later on account of illness, I had any quantity of room and could dispose of my camera-case, portmanteau, and books close to my head. Beyond, on the other kartel, our saddlery, cartridges, and other personal effects, rolls of tobacco for the men, and, later on, heads and horns of game, bird-skins and other specimens reposed. Comfortably ensconced thus in a good roomy waggon, one cannot wish to be better housed, and with the 'foreclap' (or curtain) fastened down on cold nights, or raised in warm weather, one is perfectly independent of the elements. A silk or woollen night-cap is a useful accessory, and renders one still further oblivious of draughts. Under the waggon, in a kind of hanging box, are our small Boer waggon-chairs, a tiny folding table, pots, pans, and other cooking implements. In boxes at the side near the buck-rail are plates, knives, forks, and so on.

There is a wonderful charm about waggon-life far away on the veldt; and at early morn as you wake and hear the horses (always fastened to the wheels at night) contentedly crunching their mealies, and look out upon the dawn just paling the eastern sky, and hear the soft whistle of the pelicans and the 'honk' of wild geese from the river or the sharp call of the African partridge from the veldt, or dose off at night with the loom of the deep blue, starry sky filling up the open front of the waggon, you realise that such a home has its pleasures, and very deep ones too.

We had expected to find the remains of waterpools in the bed of the Lotsani River, but were disappointed, and after the first outspan, where we filled the barrels, we met with no water for two days—a long dry trek for the oxen and horses. On the 21st we passed the Manatookoo range, and the Chapong hills above Khama's town began to fade behind us. On the 22nd we reached water and a cattle-post, and here discovered, for the first time, that we were now beyond the region of money and of clothes, the Bamangwato hereabouts being innocent of the use of either. From this point milk, corn, and other articles had to be bartered for in kind—percussion-caps, powder, knives, and bright handkerchiefs always serving as current coin. This morning early we passed through some picturesque grassy kopjes (small hills), where pheas-

sants were found in great plenty. We had some very pretty shooting before breakfast and got several brace of these and a small and very charming partridge. Although so-called pheasants and partridges throughout South Africa, these birds are, strictly speaking, francolins. The pheasants shot on this occasion, and, indeed, commonly found near water throughout North Bechuanaland and the Lake N'Gami country, are of a mottled, dark brownish drab colour, having red legs and bills. They are identical with the *Francolinus adspersus* of Waterhouse, first discovered in Sir James Alexander's Expedition to Great Namaqualand in 1836. They lie extremely close, and are hard even to kick up, and, when flushed, will usually shelter in dense bush or fly into trees. The 'partridge' shot this day, *Francolinus subtorquatus*, or Coqui francolin, is, in my judgment, one of the most elegant little game-birds in the world. The brilliant golden tan of its head and neck, and the curious hawk-like markings of its breast—black-brown crossbars on a creamy ground—the black collar upon its throat, and its diminutive size, serve to distinguish it readily from all other South African francolins. This bird is first found in the northern part of British Bechuanaland, and its range extends certainly as far as Lake N'Gami, probably much beyond. A pretty little slender-legged courser (*Cursorius Burchellii*) was also shot during the day.' Passing the rough and very precipitous bed of a dry, stony watercourse in the evening, we entered a beautiful park-like stretch of most game-like country towards sunset—a broad, open valley, well clothed with timber and long, yellow grass reaching up to one's shoulders, the whole enclosed in a setting of picturesque mountains. At night we outspanned under a big flat-topped rocky mountain, near which was a small pool of water, the place being known as Seleba Samoutchana.

Here Mackay, who had been suffering from fever, seemed much worse, and we decided to rest a day or so to give him a chance of recovery, as he seemed too ill to proceed. Next morning, Dove and I rode out with Patshalaan to look for koodoo, word having come that these fine antelopes were to be found in the neighbourhood. Dove got away from us, and, shortly after, my hunter having hit upon the spoor, a grand bull, carrying his fine spiral horns with majestic grace, and three cows, cantered across a glade to our right. We were quickly after them. The bull was too smart for us, however, and the bush too thick, and I only had a shot at the cows, one of which I hit hard, but rather too far back from the shoulder. We followed her blood-spoor all the

afternoon into and through dense mopani forest, and then reluctantly had to give her up. Patshalaan's spooring in the forest was a treat to watch: no European and few natives could have followed the intricacies and windings of the track, in difficult country, in so steady and persistent a manner. Some natives at a kraal near were told of the wounded koodoo, and I have no doubt afterwards secured her. Dove, whom I found at the waggons, had had no luck, although he had seen on a far-off kopje two or three of those graceful little mountain-antelopes, the klipspringer, the chamois of South Africa.

Next morning Mackay, to our great dismay, was worse, and had made up his mind to turn back for Palachwe. This was a most unfortunate break in our expedition, and was keenly felt by all of us. However, there was no help for it; we were going into a country where the chances of a successful cure diminished daily, and so, taking with him two horses, and a boy to assist him, he bid a sorrowful farewell and left us. I took a photograph of the camp and Mackay's parting with Dove, which resulted afterwards very successfully. Mackay eventually got well at Khama's, and afterwards joined the Pioneers in their march to Mashonaland.

Trekking on, we came towards evening to a most beautiful stream of clear water—the Moqui River—running over a clean, rocky bed, a most unusual thing in this part of South Africa. Here we had our last bathe for some time to come, and in the morning obtained some capital shooting among the Coqui francolins. Among the thorn-trees at this place, and, indeed, in most parts of North Bechuanaland where water is to be found, numbers of Rüppell's parrots (*Psittacus Rüppellii*), pretty little fellows clad in brilliant plumage of blue, green and yellow, were to be seen, their shrill, squeaking cry and rapid flight instantly marking them out. These parrots are easily tamed and make gentle and affectionate pets. Moving on through a fine, grassy, well-wooded country, among picturesque, broken, flat-topped hills, we came upon our second trouble on the 25th, when the after-axle of the light waggon broke down. This necessitated a day's delay, during which David, our head driver—the best native workman I ever saw, and a wonderful man with the adze—fashioned and fitted a false axle out of the hard wood of the camelthorn-tree (*Acacia giraffæ*). This operation had to be repeated several times during the expedition, and our false axle was a constant fear and anxiety to us, especially in crossing the thirst-land.

After a frightfully rough trek over stony declivities we came at sundown of the 26th to a small stream, where we had some very pretty flight-shooting at double-banded sandgrouse as they came down to water. The flight of these birds is extremely swift, and after a few shots they become exceedingly dodgy, unless in large numbers. Even Dove, who is an exceptionally fine shot, found himself firing behind his bird every now and again. Unless one could get them against the light of the fading sunset, it was a case of hearing their curious whistle and then snapping at a dark form as it flashed by.

On the evening of the 27th we reached Meisa, the last of Khama's cattle-posts on this side of the thirst-land lying between here and the Botletli. At Meisa there is a sharp descent, and thereafter, right away to Lake N'Gami and beyond, the country is perfectly flat. After some weeks of travel through this everlasting plain, our joy, on returning, at seeing the blue hills of Khama's more immediate country may be well imagined. For the first time since leaving Ramathlabana, fifteen miles north of Mafeking, we heard to-day the well-remembered harsh, grating call of the black-and-white bustard, known in South Africa as the black koorhaan (*Eupodotis afroides*). After so long a silence, it was quite refreshing to hear the 'craak-craak' of this old friend. Although unpopular with Colonists, on account of its noisy sport-spoiling habits, this is in appearance one of the handsomest game-birds of South Africa. At Meisa we met, as we often did till we quitted the Zambesi road, a band of natives from beyond the Zambesi, on their way down country to seek work at Kimberley or Johannesburg. These poor people make the long and fatiguing journey on foot with but scanty preparation. They carry, as a rule, a calabash or two of water, a piece or two of rough salt, a few handfuls of grain, their assegais and short skin cloaks, and trust to luck and pluck to pull them through. It argues well indeed for their faith in the British paymaster, distant so many a weary hundred leagues from their homes, that they will thus tempt fortune. As a rule they carried with them beautiful samples of native ironwork, in the shape of battle-axes and assegais, the latter very curiously barbed; and, by giving them meat and meal in exchange, we purchased some very good specimens in this way. Strange, wild-looking fellows they are mostly, with skins of an intense black, and long, woolled hair, often fantastically decorated with feathers, heads of birds, and other strange fancies. These people differ

greatly from the races south of the Zambesi. I noticed one boy among the pilgrims at Meisa with beautiful almond-shaped eyes and even eyebrows—quite Egyptian in his type. His long, straight hair, each kink of wool twisted, oiled, and pulled down, added greatly to the resemblance. At Meisa, Khama's mountains end and the true waterless Kalahari country stretches away westward to the Botletli River. This evening, after some more flight-shooting, we met with four Masarwa Bushmen, who informed us that a day or two farther on we should find giraffe. We arranged for three of these men to spoor for us on the following day, and, having trekked beyond Meisa during the night, we rode on with Joseph, leaving the waggons to follow us to Maqua, a pool in the desert a little to the left hand of the Zambesi road. Our Masarwa friends took us left-handed until, after an hour through thin bush, we emerged upon a huge open plain, yellow with long winter grass. We had been following the spoor of hartebeests for some time, and surely enough, some way out on the flat, we could discern a good troop; and, farther on, yet another. We now spread out in line and walked quietly towards the nearest, which presently began to be disturbed, and, an old bull sentinel having given the alarm, the game moved slowly off. I succeeded eventually, by riding hard on the extreme right, in driving the troop left-handed; Dove's horse, however, put his foot in a hole while galloping hard and, throwing his rider heavily, bolted; while the after-rider, who had a good chance at some of the buck as they passed him, missed clean and let them go unscathed. The rest of the far-distant hartebeests at the sound of firing took to their heels, and, lopping away with that wonderful untiring pace of theirs, soon left the plain tenantless. The Bushmen presently came up, and, I having caught Dove's horse, we off-saddled for a few minutes.

While we sat down, one of the Masarwas took from his neck four curious-looking pieces of ivory, three triangular in shape, the fourth longer and rather pointed at either end. All four pieces were flat and had a sort of pattern rudely worked upon them. Shaking the ivory pieces in the hollow of his hands, the Masarwa cast them on the ground, and, after gazing intently for a moment, all three burst into a torrent of their extraordinary clicking language, pointing at the same time earnestly at the dice, for such I may call them.

Our after-rider, who partly understood the Bushmen, now explained to us that they were throwing their dice to ascertain

what sport was in store for us. As the pieces of ivory fell so should fortune favour one or other of us. After several castings, much gesticulation, and a perfect ocean of their singular speech, we were informed that Dove was shortly to kill two giraffe and I one. This prophecy was partially fulfilled within two days. The whole of the performance was conducted with the most perfect seriousness and intent, and the manifest scepticism of Dove and myself had no effect upon our prophets, although in their good-humoured way they laughed with us.

Proceeding across another typical South African plain, and through fine open camelthorn (giraffe acacia) forests, we saw little or no game during the rest of that day, although we came across spoor of blue wildebeest. In the evening, the waggons having come on, we outspanned at Maqua Pool, a miserable water of most foul smell and consistency, now rapidly disappearing under a too ardent sun. Here enormous flights of doves (*Turtur senegalensis*) came down at sunset, and one of our boys, taking a shot-gun, secured sixteen in two shots, thus providing a good banquet for his fellows and the Bushmen. Curiously enough, no sandgrouse came to this pool at evening, although we had seen them at other waters at about sundown; but, on the two following mornings, while we lay there, many hundreds came down.

The lame waggon had again broken down this afternoon, and, the next day being Sunday, we arranged to stand at this water until repairs were completed. We were awake next morning early, and after coffee, as I was writing up my diary on the kartel, Dove called out from his waggon that the sandgrouse were coming to water. During the next two hours, that is, from 8 to 10 A.M., enormous numbers of three varieties—the common Namaqua sandgrouse (*Pterocles Namaqua*), always called in South Africa the Namaqua partridge; the beautiful variegated variety (*Pterocles variegatus*), and the largest and rarest of this family, the buff-throated sandgrouse (*Pterocles gutturalis*), came sweeping and whirling round the pool, every now and again settling down in a pack with a swift rush to drink at the water's edge. It was the prettiest sight in the world. Our numbers had been recruited by the wives and children of our Masarwa hunters, who had arrived over-night. These poor people, who had been living on nothing but bulbs and ground-nuts for some time, were in the most miserable condition, and Dove and I felt, therefore, small compunction in shooting them a number of sandgrouse, as they came whirring, with shrill whistle, over our

waggons. During the two hours of flight we shot eighteen brace—often getting two at a shot—and could have killed with ease twice that number, and our Bushman friends were soon at work enjoying a solid breakfast. The buff-throated sandgrouse, although not more beautiful than the exquisite double-banded variety, is in some ways more remarkable. We found it rarer and more local, and it is considerably the largest of the four varieties in South Africa. It is, too, by far the most grouse-like of its genus, and approaches more nearly in the deep chocolate-red colouring of the under part of the body, and in its cry, to the red grouse of Scotland. Dove, who is a Lowland Scot, compared its cry to that of the grouse as they fly among the corn-stooks in autumn, and his simile is apt enough. In the male bird the colouring of the breast and upper part of the body is in life of a peculiar sulphur-green, the back and tail are greyish buff, the sides of the head and chin pale yellow, while a dark brown, crescent-like band crosses the breast. The hen is less remarkable, her upper colouring being buff-yellow thickly sprinkled with brown and black, while the under part is of a rich chestnut and black. We had our guns beside us as we sat at breakfast, every now and then jumping up at a tempting shot.

I took some interesting photographs of the Masarwas at this place, and of their wives as they filled their ostrich eggs, calabashes, and miserable clay vessels at the water. These people are pure and simple aboriginal hunters; they build no houses, a mere screen of bushes serving them for shelter, and wear but the scantiest suspicion of clothing, and apparently nothing will tempt them to give up their wild roving life and take to the more civilised habits of the Bechuanas. These latter call them dogs, and treat them very much as slaves.

Their skin cloaks are small and barely reach to their middles, and from lying close to the fire at night they burn their legs in a dreadful manner. I have seen a great many Masarwas, but I never yet saw one who had not his or her legs either scarred with sores or burnt perfectly raw from this cause. The old men and women are even more pitiable objects, their chests and stomachs being usually shockingly burnt.

As a rule we found these people thin and poorly nourished, and their legs and arms were often mere sticks, and yet they will keep in front of a horse, walking fast or trotting all day under a hot sun. It is one of the strictest axioms of South African

hunting etiquette that, although you are mounted, your Masarwa shall carry your rifle, and thus encumbered with rifles, their rude choppers, assegais, skin-cloaks, and often a calabash of water, all day—day after day—they will toil manfully in front of you in the hope of finding and seeing game killed. True sportsmen are they, indeed, and the most wonderful trackers, perhaps, in the world. It is a fact that a Masarwa can, from the appearance of the spoor, tell you to within a few minutes how long it is since game has passed. Their instinct in this respect, and the faculty of finding their way in the wildest veldt, is quite unerring.

These Bushmen bear no sort of resemblance to the small Chinese-like Hottentot Bushmen of the old Cape Colony. As a rule they stand from 5 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 6 inches in height, and their skins are of a deep red-brown. Their language is burdened with an extraordinary succession of clicks, often sounding like a high, querulous grumble, and is apparently of a very primitive order. Their weapons are assegais, and small bows shooting tiny poisoned arrows. With these light reed arrows, tipped with bone and smeared with the poison of the N'gwa caterpillar, or of snakes and euphorbia, they will bring down even the tall giraffe. To do this, however, they have to steal up and pierce this animal beneath the legs in the thinnest part of its tough hide, and even then they often have to follow their quarry four or five days before the poison completes its work upon so huge a frame. Other animals die more speedily. These wild hunters are in no way akin to the Bechuanas, or apparently any other tribe of Central South Africa. Of their own origin they are perfectly ignorant. Probably the truth is they are aboriginal hunters settled in these regions during untold centuries. Unlike the fierce Bushmen of the Cape Colony they are peaceable and harmless, and almost invariably friendly to the white man.

The rest of the day was spent quietly cleaning guns and rifles, skinning birds, and helping to fit a new axle to the crippled waggon. News came in during the evening that nine giraffe had been seen not far away.

The next morning at grey dawn we were up, and had breakfasted and saddled up by sunrise—about 6.15 at this time of year, June. After riding three hours steadily in a north-westerly direction, during which time we only saw small buck and some enormous troops of guinea-fowl—sixty and eighty in a band—we came up to the *scherm* of a Masarwa living with his wife and child far out in the bush. This man, for a wonder, appeared or pretended to

know little about the game we were after; but his wife, a most voluble lady, volunteered all necessary information, and, with an astounding profusion of clicks, pointed out the direction in which we should find the giraffe. Her husband, before we came up, had been setting fire to the long, over-ripe grass, and, the wind shifting suddenly, the flames came our way, and we had to move farther into the bush. My companions and I were intensely amused at the woman's desperate anxiety to save her household effects. These consisted literally of half-a-dozen dried guinea-fowls' crops, neatly skewered on a stick, and containing the bulbs or ground-nuts on which guinea-fowls and Masarwas alike feed, the feet of a dead eagle, a calabash or two, and a small and very dirty skin cloak or kaross. Two steinbok skins completed the outfit, and yet this lady displayed as much anxiety over the safety of her *lares* and *penates* as would have done any English housewife over the contents of a well-furnished mansion. The members of this particular family were better looking than the average run of Masarwas, and were all singularly alike.

We noticed a most curious spectacle as the flames sped, with a low crackling roar, through the long dry grass. Numbers of butterflies, driven out by the fire and smoke, were flying aloft, and some scores of brilliant rollers were darting hither and thither, eagerly hawking at the butterflies. These rollers, erroneously called blue-jays throughout Bechuanaland, are marvels of an almost impossible colouring. Nature has painted them with a bewildering blending of dark greens, light greens, purples, light and dark blues, purplish-pink, and pale reddish-brown. And yet as one handles this bird, one cannot quarrel with any part of its wonderful scheme of colour. It is in every respect perfect and beautiful. Naturalists know this particular roller as *Coracias caudata*. Up country it is familiar as Moselekatse's bird, for the reason that this renowned Matabele chief constantly wore the two long tail-feathers in his hair and allowed no one else to do so.

Within another hour from leaving these Masarwas, our hunters had taken us up to a troop of five camelopards, out of which Dove, after a long chase, secured a fine fat cow—the first giraffe scored during our trip—to his great contentment. Our horses, new to this sport, behaved extremely ill on this occasion, Dove's needing no end of riding to get near the game, and mine—scared by the strong musky smell and unwonted appearance of these animals—bolting as I jumped off to fire, thus throwing me clean out of the chase.

There was great rejoicing at the camp that night, and for the next few days much feasting and a great making of sjamboks¹ out of the thick hide. For the next two days we trekked across hot, open grassy plains, and through dreary mopani forest, all alike waterless, until, on the evening of July 2, we reached T'lala Mabéli, a small limestone pit, which, however, held but a bucket or two of water. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to out-span and send the oxen on early next morning to Dinokani, another water some miles farther. The horses were sent on a little later, and were glad enough, poor brutes, to get a drink after forty-eight hours' thirst.

At T'lala Mabéli we quitted the Zambesi road and struck in a south-westerly direction for T'Klakane, a water on the old Trek-Boer route to Lake N'Gami. We had hoped to find sufficient water for the oxen at the limestone pits of Maruti, Tauane, or Soronyan between these points, but were disappointed. It was now getting well on into the dry season, and the scant waters were drying up everywhere in the desert. At Maruti there were a few bucketfuls of the vilest and foulest water imaginable, among two spans of thirsty oxen a mere drop in the ocean. Few people, until they have witnessed it, can appreciate the enormous drinking capacity of a thirsty trek-ox, and even a good-sized pool diminishes very alarmingly when many oxen are watered there. Barring, therefore, the few mouthfuls of bad water our oxen and horses got at Maruti, they had no real drink from the afternoon of Thursday, July 3, until about the same hour on Sunday, the 6th, practically three days and nights of thirst. Mr. John Stromboom, the Lake N'Gami trader, who followed us later upon this route with a large expedition, suffered more severely. The water at Maqua had given out, and between Meisa and T'Klakane he lost many oxen from thirst and exhaustion.

There are two ways of crossing the thirst-land lying between Khama's and the Lake River—one by the waters of Kanne, Inko-uane, and T'Klakane, along the old road whereon the Trek-Boers suffered so frightfully in 1877-78, on their memorable Promised-land Expedition; the other and more northerly by the route we were now taking. By the old route the 'thirsts' are longer, especially in winter, and the sand more severe; yet, if your cattle are stout and in good heart, I think this road, being the shorter, is the preferable of two evils.

¹ Colonial whips.

We took this road on the way home, and although from the Botletli to T'Klakane we had two days and nights without water, from T'Klakane to Inkouane (the middle of the desert) two days and three nights, and from Inkouane to Kanne three days and four nights without a drop of water for the cattle, we only lost one ox. Our oxen were, however, terribly enfeebled, and looked mere wrecks of their former stout selves, although many of them were notoriously the best cattle in Khama's country. The route we were now travelling is a long roundabout trek, and although, nominally, there are more waters along its course, they are not to be depended upon in the dry season, and are as likely to play you false as not.

Between Maqua and T'Klakane we were too much engaged in pushing on to water, and in husbanding our nags, to look for game; we occasionally saw small troops of ostriches in the hot distance, and the spoor of blue wildebeest (brindled gnu), but shot nothing larger than sandgrouse and a pheasant or two, until we reached the real hunting-veldt at the Lake River. From T'lala Mabéli to T'Klakane we followed an old waggon-spoor of some two years before. How our forelopers held the spoor through bush and long grass, trekking as we were night and day, was one of those things no Englishman can understand. It is very hard on the boys, leading the lagging oxen through these thirsty sands; trying work, too, for the drivers, who have to be hard at it with whip and voice, half their time running alongside the span, to keep their teams in motion. At the end of these 'thirsts' the drivers are nearly voiceless, and the forelopers who guide the leading oxen worn out and footsore. A day's rest, however, soon pulls them together again. During these hot, weary days, when the sun seemed to beat down with tenfold intensity, we sometimes moved across mighty open plains which, stretching, apparently illimitable, to the vast horizon, almost persuade one that all the world is flat; sometimes we moved slowly through forests of the pleasant giraffe acacia, amid tall yellow grass and thorny bush; anon through dreary wastes of mopani forest, whose scorched and shrivelled leafage told eloquently enough the tale of the long months of drought of African winter. Yet almost everywhere, even in these wastes, grass is good, and capable of supporting cattle, if only water could be found.

All the game of this region thrive even to fatness; elands, gemsbok, and giraffe, the duiker, and the tiny steinbok all

flourish. The giraffe shot near Maqua, in quite waterless country, was fat; and elands shot by us on the return journey in the very heart of the Thirst-land, between Inkouane and Kanne, were all in magnificent condition—quite equal, indeed, to well-fed cattle, which, in bulk and appearance, they somewhat resemble, true antelopes though they are.

This portion of the Kalahari, known to Boer hunters as the 'Doorst-land' is the most unpromising and forbidding of the so-called desert, and here, from the apparent scarcity of water, it may reasonably be doubted whether, even in the distant future, any use can ever be made of it, even as a ranching country. Lower down, however, the Kalahari, as it becomes opened up, is proving itself a really good cattle-country. In places where water exists, scattered here and there in many parts of this little-known land, septs or clans of Bakalahari, or Vaalpens, as they are colonially called, Bastards, and other natives, make their homes and run large numbers of stock. Moreover, the Bechuana tribes periodically make use of much of the Kalahari near their borders as a grazing-ground for their store-cattle. For the last year busy concession-hunters have been piercing the Kalahari in many directions, even as far north as Lehutitong, on the tropic of Capricorn, procuring from the petty chieftains huge grants of land, and grazing and mineral rights, for what they are worth, and a few years will see much of the South Kalahari a big ranching country.

At T'Klakane there are some good pits of water, but they are carelessly tended and much fouled by cattle, and, as noticed by Livingstone in his journey of discovery to Lake N'Gami in 1849, the water has a peculiar purging action, especially upon horses.

It should be mentioned that through the thirsts we carried just sufficient water for ourselves and servants, in barrels and vatjes; but it had to be very carefully husbanded, vile stuff though it was, and washing was quite out of the question. For three or four days at a time one small beaker of hot water between us was as much as my companions and I could spare ourselves for ablutions—a painful but necessary deprivation.

We rested at this place for a day and a-half before setting out to accomplish the further three days' and nights' thirst to the Botletli. Here we first saw tall Palmyra-palm trees, and the graceful fan-palm, and here, too, we witnessed immense flights of sandgrouse. At the water-pits we also secured a few good

specimens of butterflies—rare at this season of the year—notable among them being two *Acroea*, one figured only in Frank Oates's book on Matabeleland, the other apparently new and unnamed.

The altitude at T'Klakane is 2,700 feet ; at Chukutsa, between here and the Botletli, 2,600 feet ; and, at the outspan, where one first strikes the Lake River, 2,640 feet. Having tested these altitudes with my own aneroid, I found them substantially correct. From T'Klakane, in order to save our horses the long dragging trek at the pace of the waggons, we prepared to ride on for the sixty odd miles to the Botletli, and on the afternoon of the 7th, each riding one horse and leading another, on which were strapped a kaross, food, water, kettle, &c., Dove and I set off, accompanied by Joseph, also riding and leading two horses.

We had ridden, perhaps, ten or fifteen miles, when we could see in the far-away distance dense columns of smoke rising high into the sky. Our 'boy' Joseph, who had been this way several times before, assured us that the smoke rose from the reed-fires, burning on the banks of the Botletli. At this season of the year the natives are busily engaged in burning the dense reed-beds, and the smoke may be seen in this flat country for immense distances. We rode on through most of the night and all next day, occasionally off-saddling to rest the nags, until, after passing the huge salt-pans of Chukutsa and Machanning, we reached the Botletli River just at sundown. These salt-pans. ('karri-karri' of the natives) are a feature of this country ; some of them, such as Chukutsa, are of vast extent, and it is weary, suffocating work cantering tired horses across the miles of their heated expanse. During the rains these pans are covered with water : in the dry season with an efflorescence of lime. The mirage to be witnessed on these salt-pans is something wonderful. I have seen good, dishonest, deceptive mirages on the Great Karroo, in Cape Colony, and in many parts of Bechuanaland ; but these were as nothing to the extraordinary illusions presented at Chukutsa and other pans. The water looked so limpid, the trees so natural, the islands so real, that one might swear there was no deception.

We saw the spoor of a good deal of game hereabouts, and, late in the afternoon, Dove had a gallop after some blue wildebeest, but to no purpose.

As we approached the river, the smoke-clouds grew to gigantic size, and after sunset, as we led our spent horses through the reeds to drink, the frightful roar and crackle of the reeds blazing

around us, the heat and the smell of burning, and the vast sheets of flame, formed a scene almost appalling, and never likely to be effaced from memory. The reed-beds at this end of the river stretch for miles over a kind of swamp, in which the Botletli loses itself, and as each reed stands some twelve or fifteen feet in height, and is highly inflammable, some idea of the sight of acres upon acres in conflagration may be imagined.

Some Makalakas at a kraal near informed us as we passed that a lion was prowling about, troubling their flocks. We could find no wood that night, and only sufficient dung to make a small fire and cook some coffee. Fastening our horses close to our heads, we wrapped ourselves in our karosses and slept till dawn, too tired to trouble ourselves about lions or other disturbers. Very early we were awake to hear the mournful whistle of thousands of pelicans, which, rising from the reed-beds, were stringing themselves in wavy lines of flight against the red and yellow sky. These great birds are a peculiar feature of Botletli scenery, and the recollection of their peculiar soft whistle, repeated in five notes, never fails to remind one of dawn and sunset upon this noble river. As we breakfasted, numbers of women, Makalakas, Bakalahari, and others, appeared up the little rise on which we had camped, each one bearing on her head an enormous pumpkin or a basket of mealies. As they arrived they squatted themselves at a little distance, waiting for their lords and masters to open negotiations. The people at the kraal here, hearing that our waggons were coming on (a great event in this region), were willing enough to supply us on credit with milk, corn for our horses, and other things. After breakfast, leaving Joseph to look after the camp and horses, Dove and I strolled down to the river. At this time of year the Botletli, which rises most mysteriously in the middle of the dry season, was low at this end, and showed but a comparatively small channel of water. As we trekked with the waggons up the river, however, we found the water rising, and a great stream overflowing its banks, flooding the country round, and forming vast lakes, channels, and lagoons in every direction.

On this morning, though the water was low, we found a superabundance of aquatic life. Ducks and widgeon of many kinds, great gaudy geese, coots, kingfishers, pelicans, ibises, and fishing-eagles were everywhere to be seen. The curious Senegal spur-heeled cuckoo, which at first we mistook for a hawk, fluttered heavily from one reed-bed to another, and that rare and beautiful waterfowl, the African jacana, with its shining chestnut plumage,

white throat, and golden gorget, ran with slender elongated feet in troops over the thinnest film of weed covering the water. It was a charmingly characteristic scene, and a welcome introduction after the weary waterless wastes we had recently traversed. During the next few weeks we enjoyed an abundance of sport as we moved slowly up the river, among giraffe, Burchell's zebra, blue wildebeest, lechwé (a rare local waterbuck), springbok, and other game, in addition to quite a plethora of wildfowl-shooting. Space fails me here, however, and I must fain leave the Botletli and its fauna and avi-fauna to another article.

H. A. BRYDEN.

*The Three Fates.*¹

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD, AUTHOR OF 'MR. ISAACS,'
'DR. CLAUDIUS,' &C.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN George entered the drawing-room he was surprised to find Grace there, instead of Constance, and it was with difficulty that he repressed a nervous movement of annoyance. On that day, of all others, he had no desire to meet Grace Fearing, and, though he imagined that her presence was accidental and that he had come before the appointed time, he felt something more of resentment against the young girl than usual. He made the best of the situation, however, and put on a brave face, considering that, after all, when the happiness of a lifetime is to be decided, a delay of five minutes should not be thought too serious an affair.

Grace rose to receive him, and, coming forward, held his hand in hers a second or two longer than would have been enough under ordinary circumstances. Her face was very grave and her deep brown eyes looked with an expression of profound sympathy into those of her visitor. George felt his heart sink under the anticipation of bad news.

'Is anything the matter, Miss Fearing?' he inquired anxiously. 'Is your sister ill?'

'No, she is not ill. Sit down, Mr. Wood. I have something to say to you.'

George felt an acute presentiment of evil, and sat down in such a position with regard to the light that he could see Grace's face better than she could see his.

'What is it?' he asked in a tone of constraint.

¹ Copyright 1891, by F. Marion Crawford.

The young girl paused a moment, moved in her seat, which she had selected in a corner of a sofa, rested one elbow on the mahogany scroll that rose at the end of the old-fashioned piece of furniture, supported her beautifully-moulded chin upon the half-closed fingers of her white hand and gazed upon George with a look of inquiring sympathy. There was nothing of nervousness or timidity in Grace Fearing's nature. She knew what she was going to do, and she meant to do it thoroughly, calmly—pitilessly, if necessary.

'My sister has asked me to talk with you,' she began, in her smooth, deep voice. 'She is very unhappy and she is not able to bear any more than she has borne already.'

George's face darkened, for he knew what was coming now as though it were already said. He opened his lips to speak, but checked himself, reflecting that he did not know the extent of Grace's information.

'I am very, very sorry,' she continued earnestly. 'I need not explain matters. I know all that has happened. Constance was to have given you a final answer to-day. She could not bear to do so herself.'

Grace paused an instant, and if George had been less agitated than he was he would have seen that her full lips curled a little as she spoke the last words.

'She has thought it all over,' she concluded. 'She does not love you, and she can never be your wife.'

There was a long pause. Grace changed her position, leaning far back among the cushions and clasping her hands upon her knees. At the same time she ceased to look at the young man's face, and let her sight wander to the various objects on the other side of the room.

In the first moment, George's heart stood still. Then it began to beat furiously, though it seemed as though its pulsations had lost the power of propelling the blood from its central seat. He kept his position, motionless and outwardly calm, but his dark face grew slowly white, leaving only black circles about his gleaming eyes, and his scornful mouth gradually set itself like stone. He was silent, for no words suggested themselves to his lips now, though they had seemed too ready a moment earlier.

Grace felt that she must say something more. She was perfectly conscious of his state, and if she had been capable of fear she would have been frightened by the magnitude of his silent anger.

'I have known that this would come,' she said softly. 'I know Constance better than you can. A very long time ago I told her that, at the last minute, she would refuse you. She is very unhappy. She begged me to say all this as gently as possible. She made me promise to tell you that she felt towards you just as she had always felt, that she hoped to see you very often, that she felt towards you as a sister——'

'This is too much!' exclaimed George in low and angry tones. Then, forgetting himself altogether, he rose from his seat quickly and went towards the door.

Grace was on her feet as quickly as he.

'Stop!' she cried in a voice not loud, but of which the tone somehow imposed upon the angry man.

He turned suddenly and faced her as though he were at bay, but she met his look calmly, and her eyes did not fall before his.

'You shall not go away like this,' she said.

'Pardon me,' he answered. 'I think it is the best thing I can do.' There was something almost like a laugh in the bitterness of his tone.

'I think not,' replied Grace with much dignity.

'Can you have anything more to say to me, Miss Fearing? You, of all people? Are you not satisfied?'

'I do not understand you, and from the tone in which you speak I would rather not. You are very angry, and you have reason to be, Heaven knows! But you are wrong in being angry with me.'

'Am I?' George asked, recovering some control of his voice and manner. 'I am at least wrong in showing it,' he added a moment later. 'Do you wish me to stay here?'

'A few minutes longer, if you will be so kind,' Grace answered, sitting down again, though George remained standing before her. 'You are wrong to be angry with me, Mr. Wood. I have only repeated to you my sister's words. I have done my best to tell you the truth as gently as possible.'

'I do not doubt it. Your mission is not an easy one. Why did your sister not tell me the truth herself? Is she afraid of me?'

'Do you think it would have been any easier to bear, if she had told you?'

'Yes.'

'Why?' Grace asked.

'Because it is better to hear such things directly than at

second hand. Because it is easier to bear such words when they are spoken by those we love than by those who hate us. Because when hearts are to be broken it is braver to do it oneself than to employ a third person.'

'You do not know what you are saying. I never hated you.'

'Miss Fearing,' said George, who was rapidly becoming exasperated beyond endurance, 'will you allow me to take my leave?'

'I never hated you,' Grace repeated, without heeding his question. 'I never liked you, and I never was afraid to show it. But I respect you—no, do not interrupt—I respect you more than I did, because I have found out that you have more heart than I had believed. I admire you, as everybody admires you, for what you do so well. And I am sorry for you—more sorry than I can tell. If you would have my friendship, I would offer it to you—indeed you have it already, from to-day.'

'I am deeply indebted to you,' George answered very coldly.

'You need not even make a show of thanking me. I have done you no service, and I should regret it very much if Constance married you. Do not look surprised. My only virtue is honesty, and when I have such things to say you think that is no virtue at all. I thought very badly of you once. Forgive me, if you can; I have changed my mind. I have neither said nor done anything for a long time to influence my sister—not for nearly a year. Do you believe me?'

George was beginning to be very much surprised at Grace's tone. He was too much under the influence of a great emotion to reason with himself, but the truthfulness of her manner spoke to his heart. If she had consoled with him, or tried to comfort him, he would have been disgusted, but her straightforward confession of her own feelings produced a different effect.

'I believe you,' he said, wondering how he could sincerely answer such a statement with such words.

'Thank you—you are generous.' Grace rose again, and put out her hand. 'Do you care to see her before you go?' she asked, looking into his eyes. 'I will send her to you, if you wish it.'

'Yes,' George answered, after a moment's hesitation. 'I will see her—please.'

He was left alone for a few minutes. Though the sun was streaming in through the window, he felt cold as he had never felt cold in his life. His anger had, he believed, subsided, but the sensation it had left behind was new and strange to him. He

turned as he stood, and his glance fell upon Constance's favourite chair, the seat in which she had sat so often and so long while he had talked with her. Then he felt a sudden pain, so sharp that it might have seemed the last in life, and he steadied himself by leaning on the table. It was as though he had seen the fair young girl lying dead in that place she loved. But she was not dead. It was worse. Then his great wrath surged up again, sending the blood tingling through his sinewy frame to the tips of his strong fingers, and bringing a different mood with it, and a sterner humour. He was a very masculine man, incapable of being long crushed by any blow. He was sorry, now, that he had asked to see her. Had he felt thus five minutes earlier, he would have declined Grace's offer, and would have left the house, meaning never to re-enter it. But it was too late, and he could no longer avoid the meeting.

At that moment the door opened, and Constance stood before him. Her face was pale and there were traces of tears upon her cheeks. But he was not moved to pity by any such outward signs of past emotion. She came and stood before him, and laid one delicate hand upon his sleeve, looking up timidly to his eyes. He did not move, and his expression did not change.

'Can you forgive me?' she asked in a trembling voice.

'No,' he answered bitterly. 'Why should I forgive you?'

'I know I have not deserved your forgiveness,' she said piteously. 'I have been very, very wrong—I have done the worst thing I ever did in my life—I have been heartless, unkind, cruel, wicked—but—but I never meant to be——'

'It is small consolation to me to know that you did not mean it.'

'Oh, do not be so hard!' she cried, the tears rising in her voice. 'I did not mean it so. I never promised you anything—indeed I never did!'

'It must be a source of sincere satisfaction to feel that your conscience is clear.'

'But it is not—I want to tell you all—Grace has not told you—I like you as much as ever—there is no difference—I am still fond of you, still very fond of you!'

'Thanks.'

'Oh, George, are you a stone? Will nothing move you? Cannot you see how I am suffering?'

'Yes. I see.' He neither moved, nor bent his head. His lips opened and shut mechanically as though they were made of steel.

She looked up again into his face and his expression terrified her.

She turned away, slowly at first, as though in despair. Then with a sudden movement she threw herself upon the sofa and buried her face in the cushions, while a violent fit of sobbing shook her light frame from head to foot. George stood still, watching her with stony eyes. For a full minute nothing was audible but the sound of her weeping.

'You are so cold,' she sobbed. 'Oh, George, you will break my heart!'

'You seem to be chiefly overcome by pity for yourself,' he answered cruelly. 'If you have anything else to say, I will wait. If not——'

She roused herself and sat up, the tears streaming down her cheeks, her hands clasped passionately together.

'Oh, do not go! Do not go—it kills me to let you go.'

'Do you think it would? In that case I will stay a little longer.' He turned away and went to the window. For some minutes there was silence in the room.

'George——' Constance began timidly. George turned sharply round.

'I am here. Can I do anything for you, Miss Fearing?'

'Cannot you say you forgive me? Can you not say one kind word?'

'Indeed, I should find it very hard.'

Constance had recovered herself to some extent, and sat staring vacantly across the room, while the tears slowly dried upon her cheeks. Her courage and her pride were alike gone, and she looked the very picture of repentance and despair. But George's heart had been singularly hardened during the half-hour or more which he had spent in her house that day. Presently she began speaking in a slow, almost monotonous tone, as though she were talking with herself.

'I have been very bad,' she said, 'and I know it, but I have always told the truth. I never loved you enough, I never cared for you as you deserved. Did I not tell you so? Oh, yes, very often—too often. I should not have told you even that I cared a little. You are the best friend I ever had—why have I lost you by loving you a little? It seems very hard. It is not that you must forgive, it is that I should have told you so that I should—you kissed me once—it was not your fault. I let you do it. There seemed so little harm—and yet it was so wrong. And

once, because there was pain in your face, I kissed you, as I would have kissed my sister. I was so fond of you—I am still, although you are so cruel and cold. I did think—I really hoped that I should love you some day. You do not believe me? What does it matter? You will, for I always told you what was true—but that is it—I hoped, and I let you see that I hoped. It was very wrong. Will you try—only try to forgive me?’

‘Do you not think it would be better if you would let me leave you, Miss Fearing?’ George asked, coming suddenly forward. ‘It can do very little good to talk this matter over.’

‘Miss Fearing!’ exclaimed the young girl with a sigh. ‘It is so long since you called me that! Do you want to go? How should I keep you? Only this, will you think kindly of me, sometimes? Will you sometimes think that I helped you—only a little—to be what you are? Will you say, “Good-bye, Constance,” a little kindly?’

George was moved in spite of himself, and his voice was softer when he answered her.

‘Of what use is it to speak of these things? You know all that you have been to me in these years, better than I can tell you. It turns out that I have been nothing to you—well, then——’

‘Nothing to me! Oh, George, you have been everything—my best friend——’ She stopped short.

His heart hardened again. It seemed to him that every word she spoke was in direct contradiction to her action.

‘Will you tell me one thing?’ he asked, after a pause, during which she seemed to be on the point of bursting into tears again.

‘Anything you ask me,’ she answered.

‘Have you come to this decision yourself, or has your sister influenced you?’ His eyes sought hers and tried to read her inmost thoughts.

‘It is my own resolution,’ she answered without wavering. ‘Grace has not spoken of my marrying you for more than a year.’

‘I am glad that it is altogether from your own heart——’

‘Can you think that I would have taken the advice of someone else?’ Constance asked reproachfully.

‘I do not know. It matters very little, after all. Pardon me if I have been rude or hasty. My manners may have been a little ruffled by this—this occurrence. Good-bye.’

She took his hand and tried to press it, looking again for his eyes. But he drew his fingers away quickly and was gone before

she could detain him. For one moment she sat staring at the closed door. Then she once more hid her face in the deep soft cushions and sobbed aloud, more passionately than the first time.

'Oh, I know I ought to have married him, I know I really love him!' she moaned.

And so the first act of Constance Fearing's life-comedy was played out, and the curtain fell between her and the happiness to grasp which she lacked either the will or the passion, or both. She had acted her part with a sincerity so scrupulous that it was like a parody of truth. She had thought of marrying George Wood with delight, she had broken with him in the midst of what might be called a crisis of doubt, and she had parted from him with sincere and bitter tears, feeling that she had sacrificed all she held dear in the world to the ferocious Moloch of her conscience.

To follow the action of her intelligence any further through the mazes of the labyrinth into which she had led it would be a labour so stupendous that no sensible person could for a moment contemplate the possibility of performing the task, and for the present Constance Fearing must be left to her tears, her meditations, and her complicated state of mind with such pity as can be spared for her weaknesses and such kind thoughts as may be bestowed by the charitable upon her gentle character. It will be easier to understand the strong passion and the bitter disappointment which agitated George Wood's powerful nature during the hours which followed the scenes just described.

His day was indeed not over yet, though he felt as though the sun had gone down upon his life before it was yet noon. He was neither morbid nor self-conscious, nor did he follow after the chimæra introspection. He was simply and savagely angry with Constance, with himself, with the whole known and unknown world. For the time he forgot who he was, what he was, and all that he had done or that he might be expected to do in the future. He knew that Constance had spoken the truth in saying that she had promised nothing. The greater madman he, to have expected anything whatever! He knew that her whole life and conversation had been one long promise during nearly two years—the more despicably heartless and altogether contemptible she was, then, for since she had spoken what was true she had acted what was a lie from beginning to end. Forgive her? He had given her his only answer. Why should he forgive her? Were there any extenuating circumstances in her favour? Not one—and if there had been, he knew that he would have torn that one

to tatters till it was unrecognisable to his sense of justice. Her tears, her pathetic voice, her timidity, even her pale face—they had all been parts of the play, harmonic chords in the grand close of lies that had ended her symphony of deception. She had even prepared his ears by sending Grace to him with her warm, sympathetic eyes, her rich, deep voice, and her tale of spontaneous friendship. It was strange that he should have believed the other girl even for one moment, but he admitted that he had put some faith in her words. How poor a thing was the strongest man when desperately hurt, ready to believe in the first mockery of sympathy that was offered him, ready to catch at the mere shadow of a straw blown by the wind! Doubtless the two sisters had concocted their comedy overnight, and had planned their speeches to produce the proper effect upon his victimised feelings. He had singularly disappointed them both in that case. They would have to think longer and think more wisely the next time they meant to deceive a man of his character. He remembered with delight every cold, hard word he had spoken, every cruelly brutal answer he had given. He rejoiced in every syllable saving only that ‘I believe you’ he had bestowed on Grace’s asseverations of friendship and esteem. And he had been weak enough to ask Constance whether Grace had spoken the truth, as if they had not arranged between them beforehand every sentence of each part! That had been weakness indeed! How they would laugh over his question when they compared notes! By this time they were closeted together, telling each other all he had said and done. On the whole, there could not be much to please them, and he had found strings for most of his short phrases after the first surprise was over. He was glad that he disbelieved them both, and so thoroughly. If there had been one grain of belief in Constance left to him, how much he still might suffer! His illusion had fallen, but it had fallen altogether with one shock, in one general and overwhelming crash. There was not one stone of his temple whole that it might be set upon another, there was not one limb, one fragment of his beautiful idol that might recall its loveliness. All was gone, wholly, irrevocably, and he was glad that it was all gone together. The ruin was so complete that he could doubtless separate the memory of the past from the fact of the present, and dwell upon it, live upon it, as he would. If he met Constance now, he could behave towards her as he would to any other woman. She was not Constance any more. Her name roused no emotion in his heart, the thought of her face as he had last seen

it was not connected with anything like love. Her false face, that had been so true and honest once! He could scorn the one and yet love the other.

If George had been less absorbed in his angry thoughts, or had known that there was anything unusual in his expression, he would not have walked up Fifth Avenue on his way from Washington Square. The times were changed since he had been able to traverse the thoroughfare of fashion in the comparative certainty of not meeting an acquaintance. Before he had gone far he was conscious of having failed to return more than one friendly nod, and he was disgusted with himself for allowing his emotions to have got the better of his habitually quick perception. At the busy corner of Fourteenth Street he stopped upon the edge of the pavement, debating for a moment whether he should leave the Avenue and go home by the elevated road, or strike across Union Square and take a long walk in the less crowded parts of the city. Just then, a familiar and pleasant voice spoke at his elbow.

'Why, George!' exclaimed Totty Trimm. 'How you look! What is the matter with you?'

'How do you do, Cousin Totty? I do not understand. Is there anything the matter with my face?'

'I wish you could see yourself in the glass!' cried the little lady, evidently more and more surprised at his unusual expression. 'I wish you could. You are as white as a sheet, with great rings round your eyes. Where in the world have you been?'

'I? Oh, I have only been making a visit at the Fearings'. I suppose I am tired.'

'The Fearings'? repeated Totty, with a sweet smile. 'How odd! I was just going there—walking, you see, because it is such a lovely afternoon. You won't come back with me? They won't mind seeing you twice in the same day, I daresay.'

'Thanks,' answered George, speaking hurriedly, and growing, if possible, paler than before. 'I think it would be rather too much. Besides, I have a lot of work to do.'

'Well—go in and see Mamie on your way up. She is alone—got a horrid cold, poor child! She will be so glad, and she will give you a cup of tea. You might put a little of that old whisky of Sherry's into it. I am sure you are not well, George. You are looking wretchedly. Good-bye, dear boy.'

Totty squeezed his hand warmly, gave him an earnest and affectionate look, and tripped away down the Avenue. George wondered whether she had guessed that there was anything wrong.

'I suppose I ought to have lied,' he said to himself, as he crossed the thoroughfare. 'They will, but I cannot do it so well. I ought to have told her that I had been to the club.'

Totty Trimm had not only guessed that something was very wrong indeed, she had instinctively hit upon the truth. She, like many other people, had seen long ago that George was in love with Constance Fearing, and she had for a long time been glad of it. During the last three or four days, however, she had changed her mind in a way very unusual with her, and she had been hoping with all her heart that something would happen to break off a match that seemed to be very imminent. The matter had been so constantly in her thoughts that she referred to it everything she heard about the Fearings and about George. She had not really had the slightest intention of going to the house in Washington Square when she had met her cousin, but the determination had formed itself so quickly that she had spoken the truth in declaring it. She made up her mind to see Constance the moment she had seen George's face and had learned that he had been with her. She pursued her way with a light heart, and her nimble little feet carried her more lightly and smoothly than ever. She rang the bell and asked if the young ladies were at home.

'Yes, ma'am,' answered the servant, 'but Miss Constance is not very well, and is gone to her room with a headache, and Miss Grace said she would see no one, ma'am.'

'I just met Mr. Wood,' objected Totty, 'and he said he had been here this afternoon.'

'Yes, ma'am, and so he was, and it's since Mr. Wood left that the orders was given. Shall I take your card, Mrs. Trimm, ma'am?'

'No. It is of no use. You can tell the young ladies I called.'

She descended the steps and went quickly back towards Fifth Avenue. There was great joy and triumph in her breast and her smile shed its radiance on the trees, on the deserted pavement, and on the stiff iron railings as she went along.

'That idiotic little fool!' said Mrs. Sherrington Trimm in her heart. 'She loves him, and she has refused one of the best matches in New York because she fancies he wants her money!'

She reflected that if Mamie had the same chance she should certainly not refuse George Winton Wood, and she determined that if diplomacy could produce the necessary situation she would not be long in bringing matters to the proper point. There is no

time when a man is so susceptible, so ready to yield to the charms of one woman, as when he has just been jilted by another—so, at least thought Totty, and her worldly experience was by no means small. And if the marriage could be brought about, why then——Totty's radiant face expressed the rest of her thoughts better than any words could have done.

While she was making these reflections the chief figure in her panorama was striding up the Avenue at a rapid pace. Strange to say, his cousin's suggestion, that he should go and see Mamie, had proved rather attractive than otherwise. He did not care to walk the streets, since Totty had been so much surprised by his appearance. He might meet other acquaintances, and be obliged to speak with them. If he went home he would have to face his father, who would not fail to notice his looks, and who might guess the cause of his distress, for the old gentleman was well aware that his son was in love with Constance and hoped with all his heart that the marriage might not be far distant. Mamie would be alone; Mamie knew nothing of his doings; she was a good girl, and he liked her. To spend an hour with her would cost him nothing, as she would talk the greater part of the time, and he would gain a breathing space in which to recover from the shock he had received. She was indeed the only person whom he could have gone to see at that moment without positive suffering, except Johnson, and he was several miles from the office of Johnson's newspaper.

As he approached the Trimm's house his pace slackened, as though he were finally debating within himself upon the wisdom of making the visit. Then as he came within sight of the door he quickened his steps again and did not pause until he had rung the bell. A moment later he entered the drawing-room where Mamie Trimm was sitting in a deep easy-chair, among flowers near a sunlit window. She held a book in her hand.

'Oh, George!' she cried, blushing with pleasure. 'I am so glad; I am all alone.'

'And what are you reading, all alone among the roses?' asked George kindly.

'What do you think?'

Then she held up the novel for him to see. It was the book he had just published.

CHAPTER XIV.

MAMIE TRIMM was one of those young girls of whom it is most difficult to give a true impression by describing them in the ordinary way. To say that her height was so many feet and so many inches—fewer inches than the average—that her hair was very fair, her eyes grey, her nose small, her mouth large, her complexion clear, her figure well-proportioned, to say all this is to say nothing at all. A passport, in the days of passports, would have said as much, and the description would have just sufficed to point out Mamie Trimm if she had found herself in a company of tall women with black hair, large features and imposing presence. It would have been easier for a man to find her amongst a bevy of girls of her age, if he had been told that she possessed a charm of her own which nobody could define. It would help him in his search to be informed that she looked very delicate, but was not so in reality; that her figure was not only well-proportioned but was very exceptionally perfect and graceful, and that, but for her well-set grey eyes and her transparent complexion, her face could never have been called pretty. All these points may have combined to produce the aforesaid individuality that was especially hers. Little is known, I believe, of that fair young girl of whom Charles Lamb wrote to Landor, ‘Rose Aylmer has a charm that I cannot explain.’ Mamie Trimm was George Wood’s Rose Aylmer.

He had known her all her life, and there was between them that sort of intimacy which cannot exist at all unless it has begun in childhood. The patronising superiority of the schoolboy has found a foil in the clinging admiration of the little girl who is only half his age. The budding vanity of the young student has delighted in ‘explaining things’ to the slim maiden of fourteen, who believes all his words and worships all his ideas; the struggling, striving, hardworking beginner has found comfort in the unfailing friendship and devotion of the accomplished young woman whom he still thinks of as a child, and treats as a sister, not realising that the difference between fourteen and seven is one thing, while that between five or six and twenty and eighteen or nineteen is quite another.

When a friendship of that kind has begun in childish years it is not easily broken, even though the subsequent intercourse be occasionally interrupted. Of late, indeed, Constance Fearing had

taken, and more than taken, Mamie's place in George's life. He had seen his cousin constantly, of course, but she had felt that he was not to her what he had been—that something she could not understand had come between them, and that she had been deprived of something that had given her pleasure. On the other hand, it was precisely at this time that she had made her first appearance in society, and her life had been all at once made very full of new interests and new amusements. She had been received into the bosom of social institutions with enthusiasm; she had held her own with tact; she had danced at every ball, had received offers of marriage about once in three months, had refused them all systematically, and was, on the whole, in the very prime of an American girl's social career. If her head had been turned by much admiration, she had concealed the fact very well, and the expression of her attractive face had not changed for the worse after two years of uninterrupted gaiety. She was still as innocently fond of George as she had been when a little girl, and if the exigencies of continual amusement had deprived her of some of his companionship she looked upon the circumstance, with all the fatalism of the very young and the very happy, as a matter to be regretted when she had time for regrets, but inevitable and predestined. Her regrets, indeed, had not troubled her much until very lately, when George's growing reputation had begun to draw him into the current of society. She had seen then for the first time that there was another person, somewhat older than herself, in whose company he delighted as he had never delighted in her own, and her dormant jealousy had been almost awakened by the sight. It seemed to her that she had always had a prior right and claim upon her cousin's attention and conversation, and she did not like to find her right contested, especially by one so well able to maintain her conquests against all comers as was Constance Fearing. In her innocence, she had more than once complained to her mother that George neglected her, but hitherto her observations on the subject had received no sympathy from Mrs. Sherrington Trimm. Totty had no idea of allowing her only child to marry a penniless man of genius; and though, as has been set forth in the early part of this history, she felt it incumbent upon her to do something for George, and encouraged his visits, she took care that he should meet Mamie as rarely as possible in her own house. As for Sherrington Trimm himself, he cared for none of these things. If Mamie loved George, she was welcome to marry him; if she did not, there would be no hearts broken. George might come and go in his house and be welcome.

Mamie Trimm's indefinable charm doubtless covered a multitude of defects. She was, of course, very well educated, in the sense in which that elastic term is generally applied to all young girls of her class. It would be more true to say that she, like most of her associates, had been expensively educated. Nothing had been omitted which, according to popular social belief, can contribute to the production of a refined and accomplished feminine mind. She had been taught at great pains a number of subjects of which she remembered little, but of which the transient knowledge had contributed something to the formation of her taste. She had been instructed in the French language with a care, perhaps, not always bestowed upon the subject in France, and the result was that she could read novels written in that tongue, and, under great pressure of necessity, could converse tolerably in it, though the composition of the shortest note plunged her into a despair that would have been comic had it been less real. She possessed a shadowy acquaintance with German and knew a score of Italian words. In the department of music, seven years of study had given her some facility in playing simple dance-music, and she was able to accompany a song tolerably, provided the movement was not too fast. On the other hand, she danced to perfection, rode well, and played a very fair game of lawn-tennis; and she got even more credit for these accomplishments than she deserved, because her naturally transparent complexion and rather thin face had always made the world believe that her health was not strong.

In character she was neither very sincere nor by any means unscrupulous. Her conscience was in a very natural state, considering her surroundings, and she represented very fairly the combination of her mother's worldly disposition with her father's cheerful, generous and loyal nature. She was far too much in love with life to be morbid, and far too sensible to invent imaginary trials. She had never thought of examining herself, any more than she would have thought of pulling off a butterfly's wings to see how they were fastened to its body. Her simplicity of ideas was dashed with a sprinkling of sentimentality which was natural enough at her age, but of which she felt so much ashamed that she hid it jealously from her father and mother, and only showed a little of it to her most intimate friend when she had danced a little too long or suspected herself of having nearly accepted an offer of marriage. It was indeed with her rather a quality than a weakness, for it sometimes made her feel that life did not consist

entirely in waltzing a dozen miles every night and in talking over the race the next morning. The only visible signs of this harmless sentimentality were to be found in a secret drawer of her desk, and took the shape of two or three dried flowers, a scrap of riband, and a dance programme in which the same initials were scrawled several times. She did not open the drawer at dead of night and kiss the flowers, nor hold the faded riband to her hair, nor bedew the crumpled little bit of illuminated cardboard with her warm tears. On the contrary, she rarely unlocked the receptacle unless it were to add some new memento to the collection, and on such occasions the principal reason why she did not summarily eject the representatives of older memories was that she felt a sort of good-natured pity for them, as though they had been living things and might be hurt by being thrown away. Her dainty room contained, indeed, more than one object given her by George Wood—from a collection of picture-books that bore the marks of age and rough usage, to her first tennis-racquet, now battered and half unstrung, and from that to a pretty toilet-clock set in chiselled silver which her cousin had given her on her last birthday as a sort of peace-offering for his neglect. It never would have entered her head, however, to hide anything she had received from him in the secret drawer. There was no sentimentality about her feelings for him, and if there was a sentiment it was of the better and stronger sort. She felt that she had a right to like George, and that his gifts had a right to be seen. Once or twice of late, when she had been watching him through the greater part of an evening while he talked earnestly with Constance Fearing, Mamie had felt an itching in her fingers to take everything he had given her and to throw all into the street together; but she had always been glad on the next day that she had not yielded to the destructive impulse, and she had once dreamed that, having carried out her dire intention, George had picked up the various articles in the street and brought them back to her, neatly packed in a basket, with a sardonic smile on his grave face. Since then, she had thought more of Constance than of George's old picture-books, the worn-out racquet, or the clock.

Mamie bore no malice against him, however, though she was beginning to dislike the name of Fearing in a way that surprised herself. If George talked to her at a party, she was always herself, graceful, winning, and happy; if he came to see her, the same words of welcome rose to her lips and the same soft colour

flashed through the alabaster of her cheek—a colour which, as her mother thought, should not have come so easily for one who was already so dear. The careful Totty heard love's light tread afar off and caught the gleam of his weapons before it was yet day; her maternal anxiety had been stirred, and the devotion of the social tigress to her marriageable young had been roused almost to the point of self-sacrifice. Indeed, she had more than once interrupted some pleasant conversation of her own in order to draw Mamie away from George, and more than once she had stayed at home when Mamie was tired with the dancing of the previous night lest in her absence George's evil genius should lead him to the house. Fortunately for her, no one had given her more constant and valuable assistance than George himself, which was the reason why Totty had not ceased to like him. Had he on his part seemed as glad to be with Mamie as Mamie to be with him, the claws of the tigress would have fastened upon him with sudden and terrible ferocity, and would have accompanied him to the front door. There would now in all likelihood be a change in the tigress's view of the matter, and what had until lately seemed one of George's best recommendations, would soon be regarded in the light of a serious defect. The position of the invader had been very much changed since the day on which Totty Trimm had been left alone in the strong room for a quarter of an hour, and had brought away with her the last will and testament of Thomas Craik.

If George had ever in his life felt anything approaching to love for Mamie, he could not have failed to notice that Totty had done all in her power to keep the two apart during the past three years—in other words, since Mamie had been of a marriageable age. But it had always been a matter of supreme indifference to him whether he were left alone with her or not, and to-day it had not struck him that Totty had never before proposed that he should go and spend an hour with her daughter when there was nobody about. Totty herself, if her heart had not been bursting with an anticipated triumph, would have been more cautious, and would have thought twice before making her suggestion with so much frankness. In the moment of her meeting with him and guessing the truth so many possibilities had suggested themselves to her that she had not found time to reflect, and she had for an instant entertained the idea of returning immediately from Washington Square to her own home, in order to find George there and perform the part of the skilful and interested consoler. A very

little consideration showed her that this would be an unwise course to pursue, and she had adopted a plan infinitely more diplomatic, of which the results will be seen and appreciated before long. In the meantime George Wood was seated beside Mamie and her flowers, listening to her talk, answering her remarks rather vaguely, and wondering why he was alive, and, since he was alive, why he was in that particular place.

'You look tired, George,' said the young girl, studying his face. 'You look almost ill.'

'Do I? I am all right. I have been doing a lot of work lately. And you, Mamie—what is the matter? Your mother told me just now that you had a bad cold. I hope it is nothing serious.'

'Oh, it is nothing. I wanted to read your book, and I did not want to make visits, and I had just enough of a cold to make a good excuse. A cold is so useful sometimes—it is just the same thing that your writing is to you. Everybody believes it is inevitable, and then one can do as one pleases. But you really do look dreadfully. Have some tea—with a stick in it, as papa calls it.'

Mamie laughed a little at her own use of the slang term, though her eyes showed that she was really made anxious by George's appearance.

'Thank you,' he answered. 'I do not want anything, but I am very tired, and when your mother told me you were all alone at home, I thought it would do me good to come and stay with you a little while, if you would talk to me.'

'I am so glad you came. I have not seen much of you lately.' There was a ring of regret in her voice.

'You have been so gay. How can I get at you when you are racing through society all the year round from morning till night?'

'Oh, it is not that, George, and you know it is not! We have often been in the same gay places together, and you hardly ever come near me, though I would much rather talk with you than with all the other men.'

'No, you would not—and if you would, you are such a raving success, as they call it, this year, that you are always surrounded—unless you are sitting in corners with the pinks of desirability whose very shoe-strings are a cut above the "likes o' me." When are you going to marry, Mamie?'

'When somebody asks me, sir—she said,' laughed the young girl..

'Who is somebody?'

'I do not know,' answered Mamie, with an infinitesimal sigh. 'People have asked me, you know,' she added, with another laugh, 'any number of them.'

'But not the particular somebody who haunts your dreams?' asked George.

'He has not even begun to haunt me yet. You do, though. I dreamed of you the other night.'

'You? How odd! What did you dream about me?'

'Such a funny dream!' said Mamie, leaning forward and smelling the roses beside her. It struck George as strange that the colour from the dark red petals should be thrown up into her face by the rays of the sun, though he knew something of the laws of incidence and reflection.

'I dreamed,' continued Mamie, still holding the roses, 'that I was very angry with you. Then I took all the things you ever gave me, the picture books and the broken doll, and the old racquet and the clock—by the bye, it goes beautifully—and I threw them all out of my window into the street. And, of course, you were passing just at that moment, and you brought them all into the house in a basket, nicely done up in pink paper, and handed them back to me with that horrid smile you have when you are going to say something perfectly hateful.'

'And then what happened?' inquired George, who was amused in spite of himself.

'Oh, nothing. I suppose I awoke just then. I laughed over it the next morning.'

'But what made you so angry with me?'

'Nothing—that is—the usual thing. The way you always behave to me at parties.'

George looked at her in silence for a second, before he spoke again.

'Do you mean to say that you really care,' he asked, 'whether I talk to you at parties or not?'

'Of course I care!' exclaimed the young girl. 'What a question!'

'I am sure I cannot see why. I am not a very amusing person. But since you would like me to talk to you, I will, as much as you please.'

'It is too late now,' answered Mamie, laying down the roses she had held so long. 'Everything is over, or will be in a day or two, and you will not get a chance unless you come and stay with

us this summer. Why do you never come and stay with us? I have often wondered.'

'I was never asked,' said George, indifferently. 'I could not well come without an invitation. And, besides, I have generally been very busy in the summer.'

'Did they never ask you?' inquired Mamie, in evident surprise. 'Mamma must have forgotten it.'

I daresay,' George replied, rather dreamily. His thoughts were wandering from the conversation.

'She shall this time,' said Mamie, with considerable emphasis. Then there was silence for some moments.

George did not know what she was thinking and cared very little to inquire. He was conscious that the surroundings in which he found himself were soothing to his humour; that Mamie's harmless talk was pleasant to his ear, and that if he had gone anywhere else on that afternoon he might have committed some act of folly which would have had serious consequences. He was neither able nor anxious to understand his own state, since, whatever it might be, he desired to escape from it, and he was grateful for all external circumstances which helped his forgetfulness. He was no doubt conscious that it would be out of the question to recover from such a shock as he had received without passing through much suffering on his way to ultimate consolation. But he had been stunned and overcome by what had happened. The first passion of almost uncontrollable anger that swept over his nature had left him dull and almost apathetic for the time, bruised and willing to accept thankfully any peace that he could find.

Presently Mamie turned the conversation to his books and talked enthusiastically of his success. She had read what he had written with greater care and understanding than he had expected of her, and she quoted whole passages from his novels, puzzling him sometimes with her questions, but pleasing him in spite of himself by her sincere and admiring appreciation. At last he rose to leave her.

'I wish you would stay,' she said regretfully. But he shook his head. 'Why not stay the rest of the afternoon?' she suggested. 'We are not going out this evening, and you could dine with us, just as you are.'

This was altogether more than George wanted. He did not care to meet Totty again on that day.

'Then come again soon,' said Mamie. 'I have enjoyed it so much, and we are not going out of town for another fortnight.'

'But you may not have another cold, Mamie,' George observed.

'Oh, I will always have a cold, if you will come and sit with me,' answered the young girl.

When George was once more in the street, he stared about him as though not knowing where he was. Then, when the full force of his disappointment struck him for the second time, he found it hard to believe that he had been spending an hour in careless conversation with his cousin. He looked at his watch mechanically, and saw that it was late in the afternoon. It was as though a dream had separated him from his last interview with Constance Fearing. Of that, at least, he had forgotten nothing; not a word of what she had said, or of what he had answered, had escaped his memory; every syllable was burned into the page of his day. Then came the great question, which had not suggested itself at first. Why had all this happened? What hidden reason was there in obedience to which Constance had so suddenly cast him off? Had she weakly yielded to Grace's influence? He had little faith in Grace's assurance that she had been silent, nor in Constance's confirmation of the statement. And Constance was weak. He had often suspected it, and had even wondered whether she would withstand the pressure brought to bear upon her and against himself. Yet her weakness alone did not explain what she had done. It had needed strength of some sort to face him—to tell him to his face what she had first told him through her sister's words. But her weakness had shown itself even then. She had wept and hidden her face and cried out that he was breaking her heart, when she was breaking his. George ground his heel upon the pavement.

Her heart, indeed! She had none. She was but a compound of nerves, prettiness, and vanity, and he had believed her the noblest, bravest, and best of women. He had lavished upon her with his lips and in his books such language as would have honoured a goddess, and she had turned out to be only a weak, shallow-hearted girl, ready to break an honest man's heart, because she did not know her own mind. He cursed his ignorance of human nature and of woman's love as he strode along the street toward his own home. Yet, rave as he would, he could not hate her—he could not get rid of the sharp pain that told him he had

lost what he held most dear, and was widowed of what he had loved best.

When he was at home and in his own room he became apathetic again. He had never known himself subject to such sudden changes of humour, and at first he vaguely imagined that he was going to be ill, and that his nerves would break down. His father had not yet come home from the walk which was a part of his regular mode of life. George sat in his deep old easy-chair by the corner of his table, and wondered whether all men who were disappointed in love felt it as he did. He tried to smoke, and then gave it up in disgust. He rose from his seat and attempted to arrange the papers that lay in heaps about the place where he wrote, but his fingers trembled oddly, and he felt alternately hot and cold. He opened a book and tried to read, but the effort to concentrate his attention was maddening. He felt as though he must be stifled in the little room that had always seemed a haven of rest before, and yet he did not know where to go. He threw open the window, and stood looking at the rows of windows just visible above the brick wall at the back of the road. The shadows were deepening below, and the sky above was already stained with the glow of evening. The prospect was not beautiful, but the cool air that fanned his face was pleasant to his senses, and he remained standing a long time—so long, indeed, that the stars began to shine overhead before he drew back and returned to his seat. Far down in his sensitive character there was a passionate love of all that is beautiful in the outer world. He hid it from everyone, for some reason which he could not explain, but he occasionally let it show itself in his writings, and the passages in which he had written of nature as it affected him had not failed to be noticed for their peculiar grace and tenderness of execution. Since he had begun to write books all nature had become associated with Constance. He had often wondered what the connecting link could be, but had found no answer to the question. A star in the evening sky, a ray of moonlight upon rippling water, the glow of the sunset over drifted snow, the winnowed light of summer's afternoon beneath old trees, the scent of roses wet with dew, the sweet smell of country lanes when a shower had passed by—all these things acted like a charm upon him to raise the vision of Constance before his eyes. To-night he could not bear to look at the bright planet that was shining in that strip of exquisitely soft sky above the hard brick buildings.

That evening he sat with his father, a rather rare occurrence since he had gone so much into the world. The old gentleman had looked often at him during their meal but had said nothing about the careworn look of exhaustion that he saw in his son's face. It was nearly ten o'clock when Jonah Wood laid down his book by his side and raised his eyes. George had been trying to read also, and during the last half-hour he had almost succeeded.

'What is the matter with you, George?' asked his father.

George let his book fall upon his knee and stared at the lamp for a few seconds. He did not want sympathy from his father nor from anyone else, but as he supposed that he would be unable to conceal his nervousness and ill temper for a long time to come, and as his father was the person who would suffer the consequences of both, he thought it better to speak out.

'I do not think there is anything the matter with my bodily condition,' he answered at last. 'I am afraid I am bad company, and shall be for a few days. This afternoon Miss Fearing refused to marry me. I loved her. That is what is the matter, father.'

Jonah Wood uncrossed his legs and crossed them again in the opposite way rather suddenly, which was his especial manner when he was very much surprised. Mechanically, he took up his book again, and held it before his eyes. Then his answer came at last in a rather indistinct voice :

'I am sorry to hear that, George. I had thought she was a nice girl. But you are well out of it. I never did think much of women, anyhow, except your dear mother.'

So far as words went, that was all the consolation George got from his father; but he knew better than to suppose that the old gentleman would waste language in condolence, whatever he might feel. That he felt something, and that strongly, was quite evident from the fact that although he conscientiously held his book before his eyes during the half-hour that followed, he never once turned over the page.

George rested little that night, and when at last he was sound asleep in the broad daylight, he was awakened by a knock at the door and a voice calling him. On looking out a note was handed to him, addressed in Totty Trimm's brisk, slanting, ladylike writing. He was told that an answer was expected and that the messenger was waiting.

'Dear George,' Totty wrote, 'I cannot tell you how amazed and distressed I am. I do hope there is not a word of truth in it,

and that you will write me so at once. It is all over New York that Conny Fearing has jilted you in the most abominable way! Of course we all knew that you had been engaged ever so long. If it is true, she is a cruel, heartless, horrid girl, and she never deserved you. Do write, and do come and see me this afternoon. I shall not go out at all for fear of missing you. I am so, so sorry! In haste.—Your affectionate
TOTTIE."

George swore a great oath, then and there. He had not mentioned the subject to anyone but his father, so that either Constance or Grace must have told what had happened.

That the story really was 'all over New York,' as Totty expressed it, he found out very soon.

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

SOME NEW BOOKS.

‘OH, bother your French and German at the *Sign of the Ship!*’ writes, in pencil, on a post-card, a critic who lives in Wellington Square, Chelsea. I am sorry not to be able to gratify this impulsive gent, and to ‘bother’ alien languages. But, in the midst of August, and in the centre of that kingdom untroubled by culture, the kingdom of Galloway, what new English book is a man to review? There are no new English books to speak of, except those, all uncalled for, with which the circulating library clerk fills up the chinks in the box. Thus one has Miss Lynch’s book on Mr. George Meredith, the second work on that great novelist which has lately appeared. The custom of writing whole tomes on authors yet alive, and at work, seems to lack finality, and to partake of the nature of the prolix. When *La Princesse de Clèves* was published, two hundred years ago, someone wrote a critical volume on the novel at least as long as the original work. Perhaps some admirer of any living novelist will next write three volumes on his last three-volumed novel. But it would be poor work reviewing this eulogium. Miss Lynch is a very enthusiastic lady: she flouts those base beings who are tripped up by the Leg, at the beginning of the *Egoist*, and who lose their road among the Crossways presided over by Diana. But she is not indiscriminating, though she is scornful; she knows what is right fairly well, and, if we are to have such long expansions on the work, happily far from finished, of lives yet active, Miss Lynch’s *George Meredith*¹ is not a bad example of the sort. For my own part, if the method seemed legitimate, I could happily write a critique, as long as the original, of the first part of Mr. Stevenson’s *Wrecker*, in *Scribner’s Magazine*. Here is the Master in his fine old form, as entertaining as ever, or even more so, and with every

¹ Methuen.

promise of great adventures. The delightful impossibilities of Mr. Stevenson's style are exhibited here: no man would tell his own story as Loudon tells his, with that noble and humorous deliberation. The tale showing how Loudon became imperfectly sober, 'of doubtful ebriety,' and how, in a Paris *café*, 'His muse was the patriotic,' is the most exquisite fooling. The only petticoat, so far, disappears in a moment, after speaking a dozen words, but she is already more interesting than most heroines. It is wretched to be obliged to taste the *Wrecker* only in sips, once a month.

* * *

Even the book which I began by intending to review is not finished, and still lacks its third volume. It is the *Mémoires* of Baron Marbot, a general of division under Napoleon, and later a peer of France.¹ I would assure the impatient critic who says, 'Oh, bother French!' that to read Marbot is worth the trouble of learning the language. The General's modest and truthful memoirs are as good as an historical novel by Dumas, as good as Lever, and as amazing. One expects to find the General playing leap-frog over Napoleon, like Tom Burke (was it not?), or charging the Duke of Wellington and the whole allied army. General Marbot, as an *aide-de-camp*, was brought into contact with all the great people, from Napoleon himself to Masséna and Lannes. He saw the inner workings of many an historic battle, from Genoa to Waterloo, and it is a comfort that he could not understand the descriptions of these fights, as given by historians who were not present. Anyone can understand the General's descriptions. He shows you how the armies were placed, he tells you what each intended to do, or to prevent, and he uses no military terminology. General Marbot was born shortly before the Revolution, in a *château* where the doors of the rooms had *chatières*, holes cut for the exits and entrances of puss. In playing at being a cat, when aged three, the General nearly strangled his little life in one of these *chatières*. He had entered so conscientiously into his part that he could only mew for help, and thus was nearly disregarded and left to perish. Children have this extraordinary power of 'playing at' things till they believe in their part. Schopenhauer, as a little boy, was once found calling to his shoe to come out of a big vessel of milk, into which he had let it fall. The shoe would have obeyed in a fairy tale, and the young

¹ Plon, Paris.

philosopher was in that stage of belief from which fairy tales proceeded. The young Marbot lived through the Terror in a girls' school, where he was a pet. He saw enough of the Revolution, however, to be persuaded that the mob is incapable of government. He was sent to a military academy, where he 'roughed it' in the old way. Then, at sixteen, he became a hussar, and was obliged to support the credit of the corps by wearing long false moustaches, like the Egyptian grenadiers of Mehemet Ali. When Napoleon was sent for to keep order in Paris, Marbot's father, also a general, left his post there, not loving anarchy, but not caring to break such laws as existed by helping to found a despotism. The Marbots went south to fight in Italy, and met Napoleon in Lyons, where he and his suite occupied the rooms General Marbot had ordered. Napoleon could not win over the general. On the Italian frontier young Marbot took part as a private in a raid and reconnaissance. The commanding officer was a coward and feigned illness. Young Marbot led the party, and inflicted severe loss on the Austrian cavalry, which he caught when watering their horses. He was promoted, and with his father was besieged in Genoa, which Masséna was holding desperately to enable Napoleon to cross the Alps. In this awful siege three thousand Austrians were taken prisoners. Masséna would not release them on their promise not to fight again, for such promises had often been broken. He could not feed them, and they were literally starved to death. 'Such is the appearance of war.' In Genoa the elder Marbot died; the son became an *aide* of Marshal Anguereau. The history of this brave man, who had risen from the ranks, is in itself a brief incidental romance. His career as a duellist would have delighted Dumas; his generosity was as remarkable as his luck, or skill, in amassing a fortune. Probably he had looted a good deal, and had something of Dugald Dalgetty, as well as of D'Artagnan, in his character. A brother of Marbot's, in the same service, got him into trouble. There was a movement against Napoleon in the army of the North. Bernadotte was at its head, but Bernadotte's papers were concealed, like the cup in Benjamin's sack, among the baggage of Marbot's brother. Here they were found, when the conspiracy failed, because one of the chiefs stopped to shave just at the critical moment. On that ten minutes turned all modern history. Bernadotte made Marbot's brother a scapegoat, and, Napoleon not distinguishing among the Marbots, our hero narrowly escaped being involved. He did escape, however, was

present at Austerlitz, and has left the most brilliant account of that campaign. At Eylau his adventures far excel the inventions of romance. In Spain he saw the first rising in Madrid. He carried despatches to Napoleon, whom he found with the Spanish Royal family. A strange scene followed. Marbot was at Busaco and other Peninsular battles, and he describes them all in the minute detail only possible to a vivacious eye-witness. He does not try to make war odious, but he tells much of horror that is omitted in official histories, and much of humorous 'below the dignity of history.' Tales of spies, successful or unsuccessful, of captures, of bands from all armies which united to plunder on their own account, anecdotes of the jealous quarrels of generals, abound in every chapter. You learn much history without thinking of it, and gain infinite experience in the course of being amused. General Marbot seems to have been a Frenchman of the best sort—gay, courageous, humane, and lucky, with the luck which sometimes befriends the brave. It is a delight to turn to his manly and adventurous pages, from a book like the new *Life of Mrs. Carlyle*, with all the sad repeated tale of bugs, crowing cocks, groundless frantic jealousies, howls of woe over the most trivial discomforts, shrewish bickerings, brief reconciliations, and all the other too-familiar sorrows of that self-tormenting household. The moral for ladies is, 'Don't marry literary men.' The marriages of authors have been wretched, out of all proportion to the common lot. The reason is not only that authors are vain, and irritable, and flighty, and absorbed, like artists, in their work. The true, or chief, cause of married misery among writers is probably this: *they do their work at home*. Now, bricklayers, soldiers, doctors, barristers, clerks, and most men, do their work away from home. Domestic troubles about servants, children, butchers, dressmakers, cannot be launched on *them* while they are occupied with their business. Nor do they, in turn, bring preoccupation with briefs, or bricks, or clients, or what not, into their domestic circle. But Mrs. Literary Man is apt to rush in upon the solitude of Genius with some 'terrible tale from the baker's,' while Genius, when summoned to his meals, has his head full of rhymes, or of the persons in his novel, or, to take Mr. Carlyle's case, of Frederick the Great or Oliver Cromwell. His mind is absent when he should be lending the pleased ear to feminine prattle, and, later, when examined therein, he is miserably plucked. He is convicted of not having attended to what was said—a crime of insult. I dare-say Mrs. Carlyle often found Mr. Carlyle an unconcerned and

impatient hearer of her witty conversation, whereas he did listen, when away from home in a country house, to Lady Ashburton. Hence these tears of Mrs. Carlyle's, and the confidences which she inflicted on Mazzini and others. The unlucky pair, as Mrs. Carlyle said, had thinner skins than other people, and were profusely profane, to begin with. But if Mr. Carlyle had been wise enough to keep his books and papers in a remote studio, and to walk thither every morning, he and his wife would have given less handle to the 'gossip and the biographer. Young ladies about to marry literary men, young men engaged to literary ladies, should ponder on these things, and arrange to do their work away from home, unless they have much better tempers and digestions than the Carlyles enjoyed. 'Home industries' may be salutary when they are mechanical, but not when they are mental, especially if the labourer has the irritability of some, luckily not of all, geniuses.

* * *

Talking of new books, at a time when new books are scarce, may one not ask whether Mr. Marion Crawford's novel, *The Witch of Prague*,¹ is not a little too improbable, 'too steep' as the saying is? I have heard before of a young lady, accomplished in magic, who loved a gentleman named 'The Wanderer,' while he cared for somebody else. And the former young lady, like Mr. Crawford's, persuaded 'The Wanderer' that she herself was the object of his affections. But whereas wicked heroine No. 1 was aided by the Serpent himself, Mr. Crawford's dame manages the trick by common hypnotism. If these doings were 'steep' in the ages of myth, when rods became snakes, how very precipitous they seem 'in the present or Christian Hera,' as Jeames calls it. Mr. Crawford is the most astonishingly varied and versatile of modern novelists: he certainly never repeats himself. But hypnotism is ill to meddle with, and to touch the supernatural, or extra-natural, is like taking to dram-drinking, unless an author be very careful. The fair Witch of Prague is given to working over many miracles, over easily, and all this in times and places with which we are familiar. Miracles are most easily credited, if credited at all, when they are said to have occurred not later than the period of the Plantagenets

* * *

Though *ballades* be greatly out of fashion, if ever they were in fashion, here follows a *ballade*, by Mr. Murray, of winter in St.

¹ Macmillan.

Andrews, of the season which suits the grey town best. Where is Queen Mary's Thorn—little asked for by golfers, or summer visitors, even when the leaves are on it? Is it in the garden of the house occupied by Mary Stuart long ago, or in that of the Divinity Hall?

BALLADE OF WINTER.

The City once again doth wear
 Her wonted dress of Winter's bride;
 Her mantle woven of misty air,
 With saffron sunlight faintly dyed.
 She sits above the seething tide,
 Of all her summer robes forlorn,
 And dead is all her summer pride—
 The leaves are off Queen Mary's Thorn!

All round the landscape stretches bare,
 The bleak fields lying far and wide
 Monotonous, with here and there
 A lone tree on a lone hill side.
 No more the land is glorified
 With golden gleams of ripening corn;
 Scarce is a cheerful hue descried—
 The leaves are off Queen Mary's Thorn!

For me I do not greatly care
 Though leaves be dead and mists abide,
 To me the place is thrice as fair
 In winter as in summer-tide;
 With kindlier memories allied
 Of pleasure past and pain o'erworn,
 What care I though the earth may hide
 The leaves from off Queen Mary's Thorn?

ENVOY.

Thus I unto my friend replied
 When on a chill late autumn morn
 He pointed to the tree and cried—
 'The leaves are off Queen Mary's Thorn!'

R. F. MURRAY.

* * *

The parental instincts of birds may carry them too far for common courtesy. Swallows have built their nest in the eaves of

a porch here, but is that a good reason why the swallows should bully and intimidate the dwellers in the house? If a dog or cat lies down outside, the parent swallows swoop at him with a shriek, and they are just as discouraging to human beings. They fly past your ear so close as almost to brush it, uttering their angry note, and, in fact, 'picketing' you. Probably a good fielder could catch them in one hand as they pass: an Australian cricketer is said to have performed a similar feat. But, if one is too slow for this performance, it is vexatious to be buffeted by angry swallows.

* * *

An American correspondent, *à propos* of a chance remark on Mr. Home, the medium, gives a curious and interesting account of that singular man. He seems to have had an innocent but excessive vanity, and was so sceptical as to disbelieve in and dislike other mediums, including the famous Madame Blavatsky. 'Mediums whom I have Met, by a Medium,' would be a valuable work. If we set a medium to catch a medium, as unsuccessful novelists review their happier rivals, we might learn a great deal about the Black Art. Mr. Home's egotism was so frank, that he seems never to have understood why Mr. Browning disliked him, and I fancy that he never succeeded in reading the poem on Mr. Sludge, which, indeed, is somewhat long. In worldly matters Mr. Home appears to have had the childlike carelessness of Mr. Harold Skimpole, and, indeed, to have been a very agreeable person, if taken up, as Epictetus advises, by the right handle. He seems not to have advanced any theory about his enigmatic 'gifts,' which were not, at best, as remarkable as those enjoyed by Mr. Crawford's *Witch of Prague*.

* * *

Nobody helps a lame dog over a stile better than the poet, whose verse comes in to fill a place where copy is scarce, owing to fine weather and other distractions. The lame dogs of the following effusion are therefore welcome to a dog who, if not lame, is uncommonly lazy.

A LESSON OF LIFE.

A long day's journey there lay before ;
 I crossed the meadow at breaking morn ;
 I saw the road wind by hill and moor—
 Beyond the hills was my distant bourne.

I thought of the greeting I should win—
 What was it moaned at my feet, meanwhile ?
 A poor old terrier, lame and thin :
 I stooped, and helped him over the stile.

Then would have crossed ; but a dreary yelp
 Arrested me, and I turned, to view
 A limping poodle whose need of help
 Was manifest : and I helped him too.

Of every nation and tribe are they,
 And each has a fresh resistless wile ;
 Each says in his own peculiar way :
 ' Just help a lame dog over the stile ! '

They're greyhound, Skye, Pomeranian ;
 They limp along in an endless file ;
 They're smooth or curly, they're black and tan,
 They *all* are lame and would cross the stile.

The shadows deepen o'er hill and glen,
 Dim is my pathway of many a mile—
 Yet will I renew my journey when
 The last lame dog is over the stile.

MAY KENDALL.

A. LANG.

The ' Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of 1*l.* from W.S., and 1*l.* from K.L.
 Miss Trench, Pulham St. Mary, acknowledges, with many thanks, 3 mufflers
 for the Night Refuge from S.N., and 1 ditto from M. B. P. ; also 29 mufflers, 1
 shawl, and 1 pair cuffs from other contributors, already privately acknowledged.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

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C COLD,
ASTHMA.
BRONCHITIS.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE. — Dr. J. C. BROWNE (late Army Medical Staff) DISCOVERED A REMEDY to denote which he coined the word CHLORODYNE. Dr. Browne is the SOLE INVENTOR, and, as the composition of chlorodyne cannot possibly be discovered by Analysis (organic substances dying elimination), and since the formula has never been published, it is evident that any statement to the effect that a compound is identical with Dr. Browne's Chlorodyne must be false. This Caution is necessary, as many persons deceive purchasers by false presentations.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE. — Vice-Chancellor Sir W. PAGE WOOD stated publicly in Court that Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE was UNDOUBTEDLY the INVENTOR of CHLORODYNE, that the whole story of the defendant Freeman was deliberately untrue, and he regretted to say it had been sworn to. See *The Times*, July 13th, 1864.

DIARRHOEA, DYSENTERY, GENERAL BOARD OF HEALTH, London, REPORT that it ACTS as a CHARM, one dose generally sufficient. Dr. GIBBON, Army Medical Staff, Calcutta, states: "2 DOSES COMPLETELY CURED ME OF DIARRHOEA." From SYMES & Co., Pharmaceutical Chemists, Simla. Jan. 5, 1880.

To J. T. DAVENPORT, London. DEAR SIR, — We congratulate you upon the widespread reputation this justly-esteemed medicine has earned for itself all over the East. As a remedy of general utility, we much question whether a better is imported, and we shall be glad to hear of its finding a place in every Anglo-Indian home. The other brands, we are happy to say, are now relegated to the native bazaars, and, judging from their sale, we fancy their sojourn there will be but evanescent. We could multiply instances *ad infinitum* of the extraordinary efficacy of DR. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE in Diarrhoea and Dysentery, Spasms, Cramps, Neuralgia, the Vomiting of Pregnancy, and as a general sedative, that have occurred under our personal observation during many years. In Choleraic Diarrhoea, and even in the more terrible forms of Cholera itself, we have witnessed its surprisingly controlling power.

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**SOW AN ACT, AND YOU REAP A HABIT; SOW A HABIT, AND YOU REAP A CHARACTER
SOW A CHARACTER, AND YOU REAP A DESTINY.**—THACKERAY.

FORCE AND GENTLENESS.

'UNLESS MAN CAN ERECT HIMSELF ABOVE HIMSELF, HOW POOR A THING IS MAN.'

'SWEET MERCY IS NOBILITY'S TRUE BADGE.'—SHAKESPEARE.

'GENTLENESS: THE UNARMED CHILD.'—EMERSON.

MARIE-ANTOINETTE IN THE CONQUERORIE,
SAYING GRACE AT THE GATE OF
ANOTHER LIFE ON THE EVE OF
HER EXECUTION.



The Curse of Revenge.
Lost to Human Aid.

LOVE would put a new face on this weary old world, in which we dwell as pagans and enemies too long; and it would warm the heart to see how fast the vain diplomacy of Statesmen, the impotence of Armies and Navies and lines of defence would be superseded by this unarmed child. Love will creep where it cannot go; will accomplish that by imperceptible methods—being its own fulcrum, lever, and power—which force could never achieve. Have you not seen in the woods, on a late autumn morning, a poor fungus or mushroom, a plant without any solidity—nay, that seemed nothing but a soft mushy jelly—by its constant, bold, and inconceivable gentle pushing manage to break its way up through the frosty ground, and actually to lift hard crust on its head? This is the symbol of the power of kindness. The virtue of this principle in human society, in application to great interests, is obsolete and forgotten. Once or twice in history it has been tried, in illustrious instances, with signal success. This great overgrown dead Christendom of ours still keeps alive at least the name of a lover of mankind. But one day all men will be lovers, and every calamity will be dissolved in the universal sunshine. —EMERSON.

'Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the Awful Will,
And bear it with an honest heart.

'Who misses or who wins the prize,
Go, lose or conquer as you can,
But if you fall, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.'—

THACKERAY.

As time rolls its ceaseless course, Christmas after Christmas comes round, and we find our joys and sorrows left behind; so we build up the being that we are.

WHAT MAKES A HAPPY CHRISTMAS?

HEALTH, AND THE THINGS WE LOVE, AND THOSE WHO LOVE US.

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it Life is a Sham!—A new invention is sterling before the public, and commands success. A score of abominable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit. —ADAMS.

'From the days of Naaman the simplicity of a remedy often militates against it in the eyes of the ignorant sufferer. As the captain of the host of the king of Syria rebelled at the injunction "Wash and be clean," so the dyspeptic to-day, in many instances, treats with contempt a curative agent at once so natural and so efficacious as ENO'S "FRUIT SALT." In this case, however, Mr. J. C. ENO may claim to have educated the public mind to an appreciative understanding of the remedial virtues possessed by this compound. The labour has been a Herculean one, and has met with the recognition so justly due. Did the world stand still but little necessity would exist for dwelling upon the special recommendations of ENO'S world-famous "FRUIT SALT." Its merits have been published, tested, and approved from pole to pole, and its popularity to-day presents the most signal illustration of commercial enterprise in our trading records. In view of the steady influx of new buyers into all the markets of the world, it is impossible to rest on laurels ardently won, and for this reason I have pleasure in again directing the attention of readers of this journal to the genuine qualities possessed by ENO'S Saline. Residents in the fever-haunted regions to be found in some of our Colonial possessions, travellers at home and abroad, dwellers in the tropics, the *bon vivant*, no less than the man to whom the recommendation "Eat and be merry" is a sarcasm and a gibe—one and all may be reminded of a remedy that meets their special requirements with a success approaching the miraculous.' —THE EUROPEAN MAIL.

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Prepared only at ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' WORKS, LONDON, S.E., by J. C. ENO'S PATENT.

LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER 1891.

The Mischief of Monica.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MONICA THINKS IT BEST NOT TO BE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

I know I do not love thee. Yet, alas !
Others will scarce believe my candid heart,
And oft I catch them smiling as they pass
Because they see me gazing where thou art.—MRS. NORTON.

OUR readers may remember that Daisy Schofield, communing with herself about a pair of people in whom she felt a peculiar interest, asserted that there was nothing now to part them but miserable money.

Miserable money is, however, an awkward customer to deal with. Dorrien had none; Monica had none; and there was now no one on either side to give or to leave them any.

After a time, Monica told herself that she had ceased to think about her former lover. She would always look back upon a certain period of her life with tenderness, would always meet anyone who hailed from a certain quarter of England with alacrity, and would always cherish both affection and respect for the cousin whom she had least expected to evoke either.

But London life is in its way absorbing. Isabel's marriage had swiftly and easily reinstated both sisters in their former position; had opened up new occupations and outlets; produced new interests—in short, done all that such an union could do to

efface the past and make bright the future. It had been so earnestly, nay, so obstinately, insisted upon that Monica's home should be with her sister, and Monica had known so certainly that for a time at least Bell would feel lost without her, that she had consented to become an inmate of the mansion in Queen's Gate—and this meant a great deal.

It meant having a share in every sort of duty and pleasure. After the wedding there had begun the inevitable dinner-parties and theatre-parties; then an increase of visiting cards on the hall table every afternoon, which had resulted in a fresh influx of engagements and arrangements; and finally had come the great rush of the London season.

Young Mrs. Rowland and her lovely sister were to be seen everywhere. Their familiar faces once more adorned familiar haunts, and Monica was agreeably surprised to find that even her anticipations were outstripped by the conduct of a world which worships success.

Isabel Lavenham had not, it is true, made a great match; she had not become a duchess, nor a countess, nor even a great county lady—but she had wealth and a presentable husband: it was felt that she had married, in popular phrase, up to her form. As a novice she might indeed have been passed by unnoticed; but as Colonel Lavenham's pretty niece, now creditably wedded, she had crowds of visitors, and more invitations than she knew what to do with.

It was Monica who kept her from accepting them all; Monica who weighed the merits of conflicting proposals; and Monica who steadily set her face against the worthless and unprincipled. But for her sister, Bell might have won over an affectionate husband, and have repented doing so too late,—but Monica held her back. She could not make head against Monica's frowns when joined to Ernest's reluctance.

'It seems rather a pity,' she would murmur,—but Monica would toss up her head. She could still toss her head, and she was not one to let all the experience of the past six months be absolutely unproductive.

'A pity, my dear Bell?' she would cry. 'A pity that you are not to be caught in a glittering spider's web which would swallow up alive such a poor little fly as you? A pity that these bold, ill-mannered women who turned their backs upon us in our day of adversity are not to fatten upon you in your prosperity? Lady Mount Ryan is a gambler, a cheat, all that is odious and intoler-

able. What do you lose by not going to her house? I often wondered that uncle Lavenham took us there. She thinks now that she will "produce" you as one of the frisky young matrons for whose *entourage* she is famous. That is all she wants of you—unless it be to pick your pocket besides. Then what does Lady Bagshot want? She wants Ernest; wants him to hang about her carriage in the Park; to call upon her on Sunday afternoons; to be spoken of as her "dear Adonis," her "foolish young Apollo Belvidere." Ernest is good to look at, you know, Bell. I am up to her ladyship's little ways. Now, my dear child, you and I have a part to play, and though it is easier than the part we had in Lowndes Square or at Flodden Hall, we cannot afford to be caught at a vantage. Bell, more earnestly—'Bell, we are *not* going on as we began, are we? We do wish to live better, truer, more worthy lives than we have done up till now, do we not? *I* do, and I am sure you do. Then the very first thing is to show this openly. It is a great chance—the first we have ever had. We can really choose for once whom we will know and whom we will not. Ernest leaves it to you; but his friends are all that either of us can wish. For heaven's sake, Bell, dear Bell, do not let us drag him at our chariot-wheels in any direction that he would not of himself have taken.'

'I am so glad you think so well of Ernest,' said Bell, kissing her.

Thereupon she would contentedly let go the great ladies of doubtful repute, and would find her reward in Monica's nod of approval and Ernest's smile.

It was not, however, quite so easy to be complacent when Monica refused offer after offer on her own account.

Isabel thought that now was Monica's opportunity.

Even Colonel Lavenham, who, true to his character, returned in May—to take advantage of a few weeks of fine weather, according to himself; to indulge in regimental dinners and banquets, according to his eldest niece—even he owned that he was struck by Monica's superb beauty. Isabel was looking somewhat delicate; late hours and endless parties were overtaking her strength; and the colonel counselled an early retirement from the scene, and a little wholesome rustication, on her behalf; but he could not take his eyes off Monica.

Would she—hum—ha—would she care to run across the Channel with him presently, and have a look at her aunt? Her aunt would soon be at Homburg for the baths. The Homburg

baths were all the rage, and half the people he knew would be there in July. Would Monica think of it? Her aunt would be delighted. Young Lord Harbery was going there too, by the way.

Monica thanked her uncle, but did not see her way to the proposed plan. She had promised Bell to go with her to some quiet sea-place, where Ernest could only join them from time to time; and Bell was depending on her.

That being the case, of course the colonel gallantly gave way. His dear Isabel must indubitably be first under such circumstances; but perhaps in the winter, if Monica inclined towards wintering in the Riviera—he fancied Cannes was to be their destination towards the end of the year—he could answer for no end of welcome on the part of her aunt, and he would not say but he might himself be induced to come over and act as escort.

He was again thanked, but nothing was promised.

When he rejoined his wife, he told her that Monica had been cool upon it. 'Uncommonly cool and distant,' he said. 'The girl has got to know her own value, and means to make her own market. I dare say she thinks that we botched it before, and we are not to have the chance again. 'Pon my word, I think they do us very great injustice. If you and I had not taken the precise step we did, where would they have been now? Meandering about the Continent with no proper claim upon anybody, and seeing no one likely ever to give them a claim. I invited Monica to come, because I found that several young fellows were coming who had been in her train over there; and some of them at least were worth looking after. I even mentioned young Harbery. But she evidently distrusted me. She thinks she can play her own hand,—so all I have now to say is, "Let her." She has certainly done well for Isabel, so I suppose we ought not to grumble. We must get a put-up at Queen's Gate ourselves next spring. I reconnoitred the house, and it is a capital one—good stabling and everything. Rowland lunched at my club, and I did the civil by him. A stupid sort of fellow, but quite gentlemanlike. On the whole the marriage is a first-rate speculation, and we may thank our stars it came off.'

At another time it was: 'The Dorriens were friendly to the girls when they were in Lancashire. Old Sir Arthur is very shaky, Monica says. He always was a feeble creature. They had been at Cullingdon. It was ten miles from Mr. Schofield's place—a fine old estate, but impoverished. I made Monica tell me all about it. There is an only son out in Australia. I did not hear much about him. I don't fancy they saw anything of him.'

Again : ' Old Joseph must have been a perfect godsend to those girls. Such presents ! Such jewels ! And by all accounts they ruled the roast completely—trust Monica for that. Did what they pleased—went where they pleased—dragged him about after them, giving him no choice in anything ! And what do you think Monica told me ? By Jove ! it made me hot and cold to think of it ! If he had lived one day longer—only *one day*—those two would have inherited all he possessed ! She had it from himself. They had kept it quiet hitherto, not liking to bruit it abroad and have a fuss ; but once, when I was hinting in an easy sort of way about Joseph—perhaps saying a little more than I should have said in the way of astonishment that he should have made such an iniquitous will, considering he had his own sister's only children left destitute on his hands—out it all came. He had taken her aside the very day, within the very hour that he was brought home dead, to tell her that she and Bell were to have it all.'

' What a shocking thing ! ' simpered Mrs. Lavenham.

' A shocking thing of course, and worse than shocking—a piece of thundering bad luck. One day—one single day—and the two would have been heiresses ! As it was, they got not a farthing ! There's fate for you ! I always said Joseph was a trump, and I never owed him a grudge in my own mind for what happened. I had a sneaking certainty that he had only needed time to do the right thing. To be sure, after a few reflective turns up and down the room, ' to be sure, Bell is as well off as she need be, and this marriage might not have come in her way if she had got Joseph Schofield's money. I dare say she would have turned up her nose at Rowland then ; Monica is too fine for anybody as it is.'

Monica had been too fine for his eligible men. She saw nothing in any of them to attract, and no special reason for being attracted. She was conscious, as she could not help being conscious, of her beauty and her wit ; she was secure of a home ; and she allowed to herself that among the crowds she daily met she had as yet seen no one to compare with Dorrien. Till that should happen, she would let matrimony alone. She was now twenty-one, and had plenty of time before her. Time was needed, but time would of a surety do its part.

Thus the summer passed away.

Winter brought its new domestic interest in the shape of Isabel's baby.

Lapped in luxury, while at the same time guarded by common sense, young Mrs. Rowland was speedily herself again, and a

brighter, sweeter self than she had ever been before. The joy of motherhood adorned and irradiated her. Happiness spiritualised her character. She no longer needed to be checked, restrained, and turned hither and thither from this and that forbidden fruit. The fruit had lost for her its bloom; the taste for it was gone; swallowed up in purer delights.

Oh, the joyous bustle, the excitement, the impatience of getting down to Oldfield now!

Christmas Eve was once more to be waited for, since Ernest could not get away before; but a saloon-carriage was engaged, and every arrangement made which could prevent the precious baby and the precious mother from experiencing the slightest shadow of discomfort either from crowds or weather. Bell, muffled in sables, Ernest's latest gift, stepped out of her well-warmed carriage, followed by that most important personage, Mrs. Nurse, bearing the little one wrapped in his froth of billowy lace; while a gorgeous footman carried his lady's travelling bag and wraps behind. Ernest was in waiting on the platform. Mrs. Rowland's maid was already making all comfortable within the saloon.

But where was Monica? Monica did not on this occasion accompany her sister. She was no longer so necessary to Bell as she had once been; and, to tell the truth, she did not feel that Oldfield would amuse her at the moment. Her regard for the Oldfield people was great; her satisfaction that Isabel was every day more and more assimilating herself with them was unfeigned; and she would have bitten her tongue in half before she would have let fall a hint that she found a flaw in any one of the connection. But she was not herself a Rowland, and she was subject to occasional fits of yawning in the Rowland family circle. Happily, however, these were unsuspected by the supremely satisfied young wife, and Monica was only too well pleased that they should be so. She by no means intended to be at Isabel's elbow all her life. Fond as she was of her only sister, this was the last thing she desired or thought likely to happen; and if Bell did not now learn to live alone she never would.

Wherefore, as Christmas Eve approached, Miss Lavenham made a stand.

'No, my dear, I am not going to Oldfield with you—you need not think it. Your suite is sufficient. With your husband, your nurse, your maid, and your footman, you may manage to do without your sister. You enjoyed your last Christmas at Oldfield immensely, but this year you will reign there like a queen. Do

you think I am always going to play second fiddle? Not I. Disabuse your mind of that idea. I mean to go and queen it myself elsewhere. So now you know, and no more is to be said.'

And the speaker looked merry and mischievous, and would not tell where she was going.

'I really cannot guess,' quoth Bell, plaintively. 'She will not say, Ernest. Is it not too bad of her? I know of course that she has heaps of houses to go to, but I cannot think why there should be any mystery in the case, unless—oh, you naughty Monica!' all at once becoming very beaming and significant.

As suddenly did the glow die out of the face opposite.

'Why am I a "naughty Monica"?' demanded Miss Lavenham, cold as ice.

'Are you going to—let me whisper,' suiting the action to the word.

'Certainly not,' replied Monica sharply. 'How could you think so? You do not suppose I would throw myself in a man's way whom I had refused? And you cannot, you *cannot* imagine I should ever do anything but refuse him?'

Ernest had prudently turned away.

'Oh, I don't know,' said Bell, somewhat crestfallen. 'I am sure Lord Harbery is very nice.'

'Pshaw! A monkey-faced creature! No, indeed. Make your mind easy, my dear. I shall not ask you to receive a fright as a brother-in-law. You have got a handsome husband. I mean to have a handsome husband too, when I have one at all.'

'Oho! You do mean to have one?'

'Of course I do. Every girl does. But "meaning" does not make the world wag. I am not a woman of action. I shall wait till I am attacked, Isabel. I am heart-whole,' fixing her eyes on her sister's face, and speaking in a clear, deliberate tone, 'and heart-whole people have a merry time of it. So now, my love, you to your pleasures, I to mine. You betake yourself to the paternal home, where every sort of welcome—Yule logs, holly wreaths, mistletoe boughs, and Christmas cheques—await you, and I will seek mine own elsewhere. By-and-by I shall again appear in Queen's Gate, and we will talk over our adventures.'

Further than that she would not go.

Bell could not make it out. Ernest thought he could. He knew that Sir Arthur Dorrien had died in the late autumn, and that he had left his heir a worse than empty title, one burdened with debt. It was possible that Dorrien might have to return

home, but he would return as he went; and, if so, in his own mind Mr. Rowland agreed with Monica that for her to be in the neighbourhood would be unfortunate.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MONICA WENT QUIETLY UPSTAIRS.

But when my heart
In one frail ark had ventured all . . .
Then came the thunderbolt.—*MRS. HEMANS.*

‘HE’LL come back with an Australian heiress, as sure as fate!’ cried Mrs. Schofield about this time. ‘That’s what he’ll do,’ alluding to the new Sir Harry. ‘I know their ways. Now that he can make his wife “my lady,” and bring her home to Cullingdon Manor—rubbishy old place though it is—he’ll find no difficulty in picking up a heathen Chinese with plenty of money. What? What do you say? There’s no Chinese in Australia? Who said there was? It is only my way of talking, and you know well enough what I mean, George. And you know you said yourself——’

‘—What did I say myself?’ demanded he, as she stopped short.

‘Why, that we should see that Dorrien back again directly he heard of Sir Arthur’s death.’

‘Well?’

‘Well, my dear, ain’t that just what I am saying? What then makes you look sour milk at me? All I said was, we should see this fine Sir Harry, as he is now, turning up here some of these mornings.’

‘If you do, let me get out of the back door.’

‘Now, George, to bear him a grudge! All’s well that ends well, say I. And as for keeping up that jealousy of yours against poor Sir Harry, now that he has got neither the one nor the other—you know what I mean—I must say I don’t think it’s what I can call Christian in you, George.’

‘Is Monica coming to Oldfield this Christmas?’ he inquired abruptly.

‘To be sure she is coming. That is to say, I suppose she is. I suppose she comes with Bell. Mrs. Rowland writes that they expect the party from Queen’s Gate to-morrow, and who should the party mean but Bell and Monica?’

'She did not say Monica?'

'No;—no. No, I can't exactly say she did.'

He turned away.

'Why do you ask, George?' rejoined his mother, after one or two uneasy glances. 'You might have seen Monica any time between last Christmas and this, if that was what you wanted. You had only to run up to London—or I am sure I would have asked her here——'

'—I don't want her asked here.'

'Do you want to see her?'

'I don't know.'

'Well, I wish I could understand you, George,' with a sigh of perplexity. 'You "don't want" this, and you "don't know" that, and yet you are so determined to hear what Mrs. Rowland said! Now, why should you care what Mrs. Rowland said? If Monica does not come——'

'—If Monica does not come'—he turned upon her fiercely—'I will tell you what it means. It means that she still cares for that fool Dorrien.' And he threw down a parcel which was in his hand.

'Nay, now, I don't think you have a right to say that;' but the speaker was rudely arrested.

'No right? Why have I no right?' burst forth her son. 'I have a right to say what I choose, and to think what I choose. I say that Monica would come to the Rowlands' if she had no feeling still about—about the place; but if she has, she will stay away. Now you know why I don't want her asked here, and why I don't go up to London to see her there. I can wait,' and he drew in his breath and set his lips.

'Poor George, he takes it so much to heart!' nodded his mother to herself, as he left the room. 'Now he will be all in a twitter till this business is settled. Well, they may say what they please, but it's in my mind that we shall have to call on a new Lady Dorrien before we know where we are. And it would just be the very best thing to happen. George would then be settled in his mind; and if he fancies Monica, Monica let it be, for all Daisy's nonsense. Monica turn up her nose at my son, indeed! Monica has more sense. And George the head of the firm, too! But, however, that's the way sisters always go on about their brothers, —though if they were other people's brothers we should hear a very different story. If George was Monica's brother now, we should have Daisy setting her cap at him; the finest young man in the place, and as clever as he is handsome,' smoothing her side-curls complacently.

Thus do mothers muse upon their sons.

'If Harry Dorrien comes home to look after his affairs, I think I could put him in for one or two good things that would go some way towards setting him on his legs,' observed Mr. Carnforth about the same time. He had been getting firmer and firmer on his own legs ever since we last saw him. 'A baronet's name is always worth having on a directors' list, and there are several vacancies at present. I wonder how I could get at Dorrien. He would not come down here unless he knew; and of course the thing would be to get him down here.'

'Oh, do get him down, papa!' from Miss Ethel.

'Do get him down? That's easily said,' rejoined her father, jocosely. 'All of you women have a soft corner in your hearts for that fellow. He was as thorough a ne'er-do-well as I ever came across—and I dare say is no better, but rather worse, by now. —yet he had but to look at a woman to make her stand by him through thick and thin!'

'What you call a "lady-killer," eh?' subjoined Lionel, with a sneer. He could not yet forgive Dorrien for the thrill of interest and excitement which had gone the round of the circle on the occasion of the dinner-party which had now become historical.

Young Carnforth would not indeed of himself have observed Monica. Occupied with his own concerns, and with the impression he was desirous of making on the company in general and on the pretty blonde whom he had selected as the recipient of his attentions in particular, it was not until he found that the whole room was charged with electricity and quivering with sympathy over the other affair, that the superior beauty of Miss Lavenham discovered itself to his vision.

Suddenly he found himself and his fair-haired partner nowhere. He had intended exhibiting his devotion before an audience,—and the audience turned their heads the other way. He had meant the Miss Lavenhams especially to note upon what tenderly confidential terms he was with the peeress's daughter,—and the Miss Lavenhams, or at any rate one Miss Lavenham, saw only a very different person.

All the consequence, all the *éclat* of his flirtation had been completely disposed of. So very tame indeed had it been to go on being engrossed with a young lady of whom no one else present required anything, that he had actually ended by devoting himself to the mamma instead, and looking abnormally grave over a book of prints as he sat beside her on the sofa.

Dorrien and Monica had been ensconced on a similar sofa within the round window, well in the view of all, his open courtship winning her smiling acceptance,—all the world called to witness, because all the world was nothing to either at the moment.

Young Carnforth would never lose a chance of putting in a word to Dorrien's detriment thereafter. The idea of Dorrien's return had been distasteful in the extreme to him. In his own mind he was now busied concocting hints and innuendoes concerning Australian life which an auditor might or might not fit on to the head of the new baronet. Scepticism would of course receive his immediate acquiescence, and Sir Harry might depend on an effusive demonstration of welcome at any moment required,—but a sly look would meet a sly look. If Lionel's companions winked to him, he would wink to them; and he now invariably held a wink in readiness when Dorrien's name was mentioned.

'Can you tell me how to get at Harry Dorrien?' inquired Mr. Carnforth the same afternoon of Captain Alverstoke, whom he chanced to meet in Liverpool. It was an open winter, and Alverstoke was down for hunting. He had just arrived from London, and was on his way to his own place in the neighbourhood when thus accosted.

'Harry Dorrien? Oh! Sir Harry will turn up now, I suppose,' he made answer. 'Somebody knew where to write to him, I suppose?'

It struck them both at the same instant that it was quite possible that nobody did know where to write. Sir Arthur himself had not known, and when closely pressed had avouched as much. He had done so with a passing shame. Some twinge of conscience the old man had certainly had, in that he had doomed to exile his only child. He had bred his heir to pauperism. He had by the most forcible of all arguments bidden him barter his handsome face and beggared title for well-filled coffers; and it was only when the bubble burst which had been dangled before the eyes of both, that his cold heart had owned a faint glow of pity for his son.

Nay, while watching Harry from beneath his half-closed lids throughout the first hour or two after it became known that all was over, he had experienced a sense of dull, undefined anxiety.

Finally there had been a scene, an explosion. Reproaches and recriminations had hissed through the air; bitter taunts and gibes flung after them. Dorrien had demanded this: Was there anything, however little, for him? He had been told there was nothing.

He had gone to his room. The next day the room was empty—the son had left.

Ultimately, however, as we know, Dorrien had returned for a few hours to Cullingdon, urged by necessity, and perhaps by a lingering fragment of better feeling; and had taken what all felt to be a final farewell of his parents. He had written home after a time—he did not wish to disappear melodramatically—and the letter with its *bonâ fide* address had been sent to Alverstoke. Alverstoke had lost not a mail in replying, but to his letter no response had come. As the letter had been of importance, and of possibly pleasant, certainly not of unpleasant importance, he could form no other conjecture than that it had been lost.

Being of an easy nature, he did not give himself much concern in the matter. If Harry Dorrien should turn up, well and good; should by any chance be able to repay him his loan of four thousand pounds, still more well and good; but if, on the other hand, nothing further were heard of Dorrien, he could not help it. Nothing having been heard by the time he went back to London about the middle of January, he formed his own conclusions.

‘Gone a-mucker,’ he said to himself. ‘Those Dorriens are all Ds of another sort at bottom.’

It chanced that he was standing in the window of his club a few weeks after this. It was a cold, brilliant afternoon; but the air had only a delicious exhilaration for the young and rich; and the gaily attired fair ones who, clad in velvet and fur, reclined at ease in open landau, barouche, or victoria, whirling in swift succession along that fashionable quarter, looking all the better and brighter for the bloom the fresh clear atmosphere brought to their rounded cheeks.

Within a handsomely appointed equipage sat two erect, graceful young figures, whose outlines at once caught the eye of our loungeur. He started, bent quickly forward, and appeared desirous of ascertaining whether or not his first glimpse had been one of correct recognition, or whether he had been misled by a fancied resemblance.

In a few seconds he had obviously ascertained which. ‘It is she,’ he muttered, watching with a frown the carriage which, entangled in a block, had come to a standstill exactly opposite the window. ‘It is that jade who drove him to it. Poor fellow! Poor Dorrien! She might have had the decency to remain within doors at least for to-day, instead of flaunting about in scarlet ribbons. To be sure she may not yet know, but still she knows

enough. Eh?' to a new-comer who approached and looked over his shoulder.

'What is it, Alverstoke?'

'What's what?'

'What are you frowning and muttering about? Who goes there? Who are those beauties you are eyeing with such a power of vengeance?'

'St. George, you have heard about poor Dorrien?'

'By Jove! yes, poor fellow! Awfully shocked, of course. But what has that to do with you—what are you looking at?'

'Do you see that carriage?' said Alverstoke, in a hard voice, for he was as much moved as his easy, phlegmatic nature was capable of being. 'Do you see those girls in it?'

'The Lavenhams? I used to know the Lavenhams once. I don't know Mrs. What's-her-name now. Such a deuced way off to go and call. But what about them?'

'Did you ever see Miss Lavenham looking better?'

'No, by Jove! I dare say not. But what—you are not gone on her, Archie, my boy? It's no go. She would not look at you. She is for your betters.'

'And when she's done with my betters,' said Archie, bitterly, 'she drives over their necks. St. George, that girl broke Dorrien's heart. Look at her now!' and again he pointed with his finger.

The carriage rolled out of sight.

'Good heavens! you don't say so!' exclaimed St. George with a stare. 'That was what made you look so ghostly, was it? How did you know? How did you pick it up?'

'I knew from his own lips. I picked it up with my own eyes. Why, you were there too. Can you not remember that night at the Carnforths? Those Carnforths in Lancashire? A year and a half ago? Just before Dorrien went abroad? That was why he went. Perhaps I ought not to have said she broke his heart,' gloomily, 'for I dare say she would have married him if she could,—but the fact was she couldn't. There was no money. I might have felt sorry for her, if I had not seen her to-day. But she must know—she must have heard. It was in all the posters yesterday in capital letters, and one brute bellowed it under my nose as I came along here. I call it an infernal thing for a girl to be driving in an open carriage beneath the very windows of his club, when everyone inside is talking of his suicide.'

'She may not have heard, all the same, Alverstoke.'

And she had not heard.

The brief paragraph with its heading, 'Suicide of Sir Harry Luke Dorrien,' had, it is true, been so forced upon the notice of every passer-by along the London thoroughfares, that Captain Alverstoke was to be excused for supposing it impossible that it could have escaped any eye, since, even supposing Miss Lavenham had not been out of doors, she must of a certainty have been informed by others. But the truth was that Monica had been absent from London, and had only just rejoined her sister at the expiration of their several Christmas visits. When beheld in Piccadilly, Bell was driving her home from Waterloo Station.

Thus easy is it to misjudge.

Isabel had herself only arrived the night before, and her husband had not yet followed her from Liverpool; he was in the hall, however, as they gaily alighted and bounded up the steps, their ringing voices preceding them, reunion and gladness in every note.

Somewhat silently and, if such a thing could have been supposed, somewhat nervously Mr. Rowland embraced his wife, and took her sister's hand. 'Just arrived, Monica? Bell met you all right, I hope? You are well, I hope? If you go upstairs, I'll—I'll—follow. Bell,' in an almost soundless aside, 'one moment, Bell, my dear,' and he drew her within a room.

Monica ran up. 'Conjugal conferences, I suppose,' said she to herself, lightly. 'I hope the conjugal conference will not be of very long duration.'

It was not. Only a few minutes had passed ere the door opened behind her, but, rather to her surprise, it was not her sister but Ernest who entered. 'Isabel is a little upset,' he observed, hurriedly. 'We have just heard of the death of an old friend. I heard on my way up. You did not notice it in the newspapers?' busying himself with his gloves.

'I have not seen a paper to-day. I am ashamed to say I was interested in my book, and thought news would keep. Besides, I knew we should hear whatever there was from you to-night. Ernest.'

'Yes, to be sure,' said he, very gravely.

'But I am very sorry. An old friend of yours? But you said "of ours." How can you and Bell have any "old friend" whom——,' Monica broke off with a sudden suspicion, followed by numbness all over. 'Who is it, Ernest?'

She supposed it was herself speaking, but the voice sounded strangely in her ears.

'It is Harry Dorrien,' replied her brother-in-law, turning away his head.

There was a frozen silence.

'When?'

She forced the word at last from her lips.

'The news was telegraphed yesterday.'

'How?'

There was another long silence.

It was broken at last: she could have wished it never had been broken at all.

'By his own hand.'

Monica went quietly upstairs.

It needed this, yet it needed *but* this, to let her know for evermore the truth about her heart.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

Tempestuous fortune hath spent all his spight,
And thrilling sorrow thrown his utmost dart.—SPENSER.

It was between two and three months after this that a communication was received by Miss Lavenham as to which she was somewhat reserved for an hour or so after it came by post.

There were others at the breakfast table.

Alone, however, with her sister and Ernest—Ernest who had grown upon her affections strangely of late, and from whom secrets were now but rarely kept—Monica told a little piece of news. 'She has left me all her money,' she said, simply. 'That was what the lawyer wrote about this morning.'

There had been another death, another sudden, unforeseen end of a young life since last we saw Monica Lavenham; all were now in mourning for the loss of poor little Daisy Schofield, to suit the feelings of the one who mourned in reality.

There had been but a brief illness. A chill had been caught, fever and inflammation had set in, and within a few days all was over.

Monica had felt her cousin's loss, but perhaps she had not felt it quite so keenly as she would have done a little while before. She had not seen Daisy for above a year, and since then—since then so much had happened. It seemed to her sometimes as if

she never could feel anything very much again. Her uncle's fatal accident had been a severe shock to her, the cutting short of the present youthful life saddened and dejected her; but the passion of horror which swept across her soul at the tidings of Dorrien's death, had made and still made, every lesser grief shudder into insignificance before it.

Day and night the sight was ever before her eyes.

In dreams her hand once again clasped Harry Dorrien's hand. her eyes gazed into his eyes, her cheek felt the touch of his lips. Morning after morning she awakened with wet eyelids and sobbing breath, tortured by the vanishing of the mirage, by the agony of too swift remembrance.

She had grown pale, thin, and spiritless, beneath the burden which none could share.

Daisy's death, poor little Daisy's simple death came almost like a tender excuse for sorrow. It was a relief to lay her head upon the pillow and shed tears that needed not to be carefully effaced, or else explained away.

She had said she would go down to Lancashire and follow the coffin to its quiet graveyard. Would Ernest's parents have her? Would they let her go from Oldfield? She did not like to intrude on the immediate family circle at the Grange, but she was sure of the gratitude and approval such an act would excite; and on her part it was but a trifling effort to make. She was bent on making the effort.

She had been talking of this, and it had been settled she should go—should go by the two o'clock train, on the very morning the lawyer's letter was brought in. The significance of the document was at first sight lost upon Monica. Curiously enough her first thought was, 'I hope they will not think I have gone down to-day because of this,' and the propriety of letting Mrs. Schofield know by some means or other that her intentions had been fixed before anything whatever had been heard, filled her mind for the first few minutes.

But presently she had begun to wonder why so strange a step had been taken, and then, as by a lightning flash, the truth revealed itself. Daisy had meant her to wed Dorrien, and Dorrien was now no more.

So great was her agony beneath the thought that it almost seemed as though no agony had ever before preceded it.

The will had in all probability been made some time before, made in a fit of girlish enthusiasm under the impulse of generosity,

and it had never been cancelled. Had Daisy even wished to cancel it? Who could tell?

A little note was handed to Monica by the weeping mother as soon as the last rites were over, and she had by request returned with the bereaved family to their home. 'You can go to the Rowlands' presently, you know, Monica,' said poor Mrs. Schofield, holding on by the skirts which she was afraid were about to vanish. 'But come with us first, there's a dear. I have something for you. You have heard about the money, Monica?' in her ear. 'Yes, Mr. Adamson told me he had written; and this note is from him, asking for an appointment, I suppose. And George says I am to tell you that we all approve; being as you were in a manner disappointed of your uncle's money; though I did say, "What would poor Grandpapa have thought!" But don't you mind me, Monica, my girl; for I know you loved my Daisy that's gone; and if you and George—but what am I saying? Come in and have a glass of wine, my poor dear; and try if you can eat something—for I am sure I can't.'

Presently it was 'We do take it kind of you to come, Monica. I am sure when I saw you I gave such a start, though I had seen the Rowlands' carriage—but I never dreamed of its having *you* in it. Tottie, my dearie, give Monica another glass—just half a glass then, there's a good girl. You don't look a bit yourself, Monica, not a bit; and it isn't all the black dress neither. You have had your share of trouble,' in a loud whisper, with a squeeze of a sympathetic hand, 'and poor Daisy, you see, would have spared you some of it if she could; but there, Providence always knows what's best, strange as life is—and when you are as old as I am, you will learn to say God's will be done,' and the poor fond creature wiped and wiped her eyes, over and over again.

Monica regarded her tenderly. A mother is sacred in such an hour. She took her hand—she took George's hand. Even his poor sullen face was transformed for her. He loved her; she had often scoffed at his love; on this day she felt grateful for it.

How good they were, one and all! How kind! How noble! How generous! Poor little Daisy's gift had come indeed too late, but it had come from a full heart, and the true hearts around bore no grudge.

She looked from one to another; all were regarding her affectionately; several were ministering to her wants. She had disturbed their peace, unsettled their prospects, despised and betrayed them, and now it seemed, however innocently, had

snatched away what should have been theirs by right ; and they had no thought even of forgiveness ! ' I wonder if I shall ever forget this,' Monica said to herself.

At length she had to go. It was the end of April, a warm and lovely day, and the feathery banks of young green on every side yielded forth now and again the wandering cuckoo's note, interspersed with those of other woodland songsters. As Monica drove along by lane and hedge-row, the quietude and peace which had been experienced throughout the day degenerated into a deep sadness.

Rejoicing nature often makes us sadder than mourning nature. It is hard to have neither part nor lot in its innocent gaiety. It forces upon our souls a contrast. The bird-songs have no music in our ears, when the heart refuses to sing ; the waving tops of the trees fan no cool delights upon the brow which throbs by reason of the burning thoughts within. The sunshine cannot win a smile, when tears have started first.

Yet Monica shed no tears ; she did not feel disposed to weep, even thought itself was partially suspended : there only remained a dumb heaviness of spirit with which she had no strength to struggle.

' I think I will get out and walk the rest of the way,' she concluded suddenly, and desired the coachman to draw rein in a narrow grass path, beset with green, within a mile of Oldfield.

To drive straight back to the Rowlands' would be to have to rouse herself from dreams which were sweet with pain, because the pain itself was a treasured secret of the heart—and this she could not yet endure to do.

There was abundance of time. She had had all the refreshment she needed, and it would surprise nobody that she had chosen to prolong her solitude in the balmy sunshine of a glorious evening.

Probably my heroine then fell a musing. She was not conscious of doing so. She thought she was straying after wild flowers, blue hyacinths, early primroses, peeping blossoms of one sort and another. It was nearly the last day of the month, it was almost May, in short, and, the season having been unusually mild, every tender leaf had uncurled, and every bud had burst through its outer covering.

All along the sylvan lane, which twined its lonely way through banks of red sandstone overhung by tangled shrub and brushwood,

there was fresh springing grass beneath the feet; and the little ponds which nestled in shady nooks out of sight here and there, were thick with budding rushes.

Monica had always loved this lane. There was a seclusion and stillness about it which suited her restless spirit. She had often marked with appreciative eye the gnarled branches of the spreading oaks which were to be seen from every little height and vantage ground; had often alit from her saddle to gather the red and purple berries of the spreading brambles which had been in full luxuriance what time she and her sister and uncle were traversing the same windings. It had been a favourite haunt of all.

Now, she came alone.

To come alone to spots which are linked with the memory of others is a thought to excite pensiveness, if no other feeling; but on the present occasion Monica Lavenham's heart was heavy from another cause. She looked gently at a certain bank—Bell had once sprung up it; reverently at another point—her uncle had once rested upon it; but she knew for all that, that these were but the bubbles on the surface which the strong, deep current beneath was tossing up!

Pacing along, her eyes were upon the ground.

Then she came to a little bend in the lane, and a jutting ledge of rock, and all at once became aware of a footstep, and a presence between her and the sun.

She looked up and beheld—Dorrien!

With one wild shriek Monica fell heavily upon the grass.

Was her reason leaving her? Had she become mad from grief? Had remorse unwitting her?

These were her first terrible thoughts as consciousness swiftly returned after some few seconds of a death-like swoon, and she still found herself face to face with the dead, clasped in arms that should have been for ever numb.

Oh, to see the vision melt and vanish as all the rest had vanished! To be powerless to stay that fleeting form! To retain those burning whispers!

Moment by moment she lay sighing still. And still the phantasm remained. Could a spirit thus entreat, implore? Could a formless essence impart so close a pressure? Could dead men breathe?—she shuddered from head to foot.

At length she unclosed her eyes. Wonder of wonders, he was still there! She struggled to rise; he gently restrained her: she gazed around; he sought to block the view. Broken syllables fell from her lips; he whispered back.

'Monica, Monica,' he murmured, 'dearest Monica! Don't you know me? Oh, look at me—look at me—I am not so changed but that you can see it is I, who once—oh, when we parted—how little hope had I of this! But—but why are you so startled? Why do you shake so? You knew I had come back, did you not? Yes, you did, you must have heard. What? You had *not* heard? Not heard *anything*? You have received no letter—nor—nor—? Oh, no wonder that I terrified you!'

The tears burst from her eyes. 'Oh, Heavens!' cried Dorrien. 'But still I don't understand,' proceeded he. 'Your sister wrote last night; wrote while I was there; and sent the letter to Oldfield—what? You have been absent all day from Oldfield? Never mind—never mind,' impetuously, 'it does not matter—nothing matters now. I am *here*—I am *with you*;—' a pause. 'Monica,' in trembling accents, 'Monica, they said they did not wish you to be "surprised;" what did that mean?'

She murmured something too low to be caught. He bent closer. She gently moved to free herself. 'Let me,' he pleaded, 'one half minute, and you shall own I have the right. I have come back as I went only in one respect; I love you now as I loved you then, and as I shall love you always—always. And *now* I can speak—I may speak. I am no longer poor, miserable, tongue-tied; I am rich. Am I,' he gazed into her face, 'am I to be happy?'

What said Monica?

I doubt if either ever knew.

It would take too long to explain all the circumstances of Dorrien's lost identity in his own words; we will therefore briefly inform our readers of the facts, all of which were, we may be sure, fully discussed and dwelt upon ere the lovers quitted their involuntary trysting-place.

Dorrien had gone out, as we know, to seek a vagrant relation bearing the same name. Luke Dorrien had, however, dropped that name a few years previously on a certain important occasion, which, as it had considerable effect upon the fortunes of my hero, may be here shortly described.

Luke had made a discovery, and to make a discovery in Australia is to make a fortune.

No one was better aware of this than the vagabond scion of the

Dorrien race, and the effect wrought upon him in consequence had been electrical. He had been sobered into sense—also into a measure of slyness. Foreseeing himself a man of means, possibly a man of enormous wealth, he had immediately begun to look upon the Dorriens at home as *his* vagrant relations; upon his uncle as a hand-to-mouth, needy old man; upon his cousin as an idle, good-for-nothing, hanging-on sort of young one. Neither of them, he had vowed, should have a chance of hanging on to *him*. His new money was not for those who had squandered and wasted the old money.

But perhaps from a consciousness of lingering weakness, from a dread that, if applied to, he should be unable to refuse assistance, he had come to the curious resolution of cutting himself altogether adrift from the Dorrien race. Moreover, he had, with a wink of one eye to the other, created a new Luke Dorrien, a mining companion, whose name he had taken in exchange.

He had then begun to realise capital as John Smith.

A vague rumour of all this had reached the ears of our old acquaintance, Captain Alverstoke, occasioning his inquiries regarding the Dorrien he knew. If Harry could hit the trail of this vagabond turned millionaire, Harry, he felt, was just the fellow to make all smooth, and who could tell but he, Alverstoke, might see his four thou. again? He had lent the four thou. readily, in what had been perhaps a weak moment; putting it down in his own mind as a bad debt; but he now began to look upon it as a recoverable bad debt.

With this end in view he had, it may be remembered, made what he considered gigantic efforts to communicate with Dorrien, but when no response had been received, the gigantic efforts had ceased; and Captain Alverstoke, who was the most indolent of mankind, had been sure—(as indolent people invariably are)—that there was nothing further he could do; that all would come right in the end; and that no good ever came of meddling interference.

With all this wisdom it had nevertheless never occurred to the sapient Alverstoke that Luke Dorrien having changed his name, his cousin, who was also Luke, though known as Harry, might have done the same.

As a matter of fact, Harry had.

He had cared little about the matter, but as 'John Smith' wished it, and as 'John Smith' was going to hold out the helping

hand in the hour of need, it was the least he could do to yield the point gracefully.

He had hit on 'John Smith' by the merest chance at the very first; had run against him within an hour or so of his landing in the country; just as people do invariably run full tilt against their next neighbour at home, directly they are at the other end of the earth.

And Luke Dorrien had had nothing for it but to acknowledge then and there that he was himself and none other. Moreover, Luke had no sooner set eyes upon the well-remembered face, than boyish days and merry pranks, a thousand reminiscences of one kind and another, began to crowd in upon his brain. He and Harry had been breeched together. He saw once again the shamefaced little smile Harry gave him on that day.

Had Luke, indeed, beheld in his cousin the Dorrien whom first we met in these pages, such memories might not have availed to alter later opinions and resolutions; but in the homeless wanderer before him he had seen only a reflex of himself—himself as he had been until within a brief space—and there had been nothing to chill the warm pulsation of his blood. Soon the two had been as brothers.

All good fortune had been equally divided between them, and the rest may be left to the reader's imagination.

Now it happened that at the precise moment when, by Sir Arthur Dorrien's somewhat sudden death, his missing heir was being sought for, the scamp who had picked up Luke Dorrien's cast-off patronymic wound up the career of a criminal by the death of a coward. Advertisements for Sir Harry Luke Dorrien set the tongues of this fellow's mining companions wagging; and it was generally understood in the confusion of ideas that, although the suicide was not the original Luke Dorrien who had become a rich and respectable personage, he was the Harry Luke Dorrien who had arrived later upon the scene; several were found to swear it was so—oaths are cheap—and the news was transmitted hot to England.

Of course either Dorrien or his cousin could by a word have set matters straight, but, as luck would have it, Harry had started upon the long voyage homewards immediately on hearing of his father's death, and his cousin had been absent in another part of the country. Neither had known anything of the matter.

Dorrien had therefore gone quietly to his club on his arrival in London, little aware of the sensation he would cause there.

But he had dashed off to Queen's Gate presently.

Alverstone had assured him of Monica's health and beauty, thinking as he did so, 'You don't deserve your luck, my lady,'—(a comment which, we may just add, he subsequently took back with the best grace in the world),—and Ernest Rowland—for it was none other than he who had kept hope alive by means of secret and regular communication throughout all this bygone period—had answered for something still dearer to his heart. Monica was free, was unhappy, was—it was not fair to say what she was.

Dorrien left London by the mid-day train. Every calculation made turned out to be correct. The empty carriage returning to Oldfield was his only check, but this had given place to a rebound of delight on hearing not only that he should meet his love directly but that he should meet her alone.

But of course he should never have done as he did, never, never, gazing into her fair face with eyes that devoured every feature, 'if—if—oh, he did not know what he was saying! He ought of course to have been more careful, only—only he did not know how. Rowland had told him to be careful, and so had his wife. They had feared—they had hoped—they had dared to be so presumptuous as to fear—or to hope,'—in every stammering, incoherent syllable Monica recognised the Dorrien of old.

He crushed her fingers between his as he spoke.

Why, of course, she had always loved him—always wanted him. His very failings were dearer to her than other men's virtues. The tones of his voice, the language of his eye—had any other speaker ever such looks, such accents? She almost forgave herself. It seemed as if God and men had alike forgiven her.

As she leaned against his shoulder, the large tear now and again welling from her eye, her heaving bosom testifying to past storms and present joy too deep for words, I think Harry Dorrien's own heart throbbed with a new emotion. A few broken syllables dropped from his lips; she almost fancied she caught in them the fragment of a prayer.

Shall we proceed further? No, leave them here, and leave them thus.

By-and-by Dorrien will explain every mystery, will unravel every thread; Monica will learn how he had contrived to retain his own name and personality while communicating with her brother-in-law, (it was simple enough, once the tale was told), and Monica in her turn will confide in him the curious turn which Fortune's wheel has also brought to her.

He will feel a passing blush of shame when Daisy Schofield's name arises between them, and he learns the part that Daisy has played in the drama of his love ; but he is still, as ever, so absorbed in the one great passion of his life that I fear he has not the attention he should have for other matters.

Monica will lead him with a silken thread.

Well for him that she will. His devotion to his noble wife will be the first step towards higher things, and she who has so lately herself learned, will have a pupil in the lessons of life.

Dorrien's last words as the two rose from the bank, whereon the trees were now casting their lengthened shadows, were these—

‘ This hour has made amends for all.’

THE END.

The Spanish Story of the Armada.

II.

TWO months of summer were still left when the Armada made its second start out of Corunna on Friday, July 22, with fresh heart and better provision. On the 23rd the last vessel in the fleet had passed Cape Ortegal, and the wind, as if to make amends for past persecution, blew fair and moderate from the south. Saturday, Sunday, and Monday the galleons swept easily along across the Bay of Biscay, and on the Monday night, the 25th, the Duke found himself with all his flock about him at the mouth of the English Channel. Tuesday broke calm and cloudy, with a draft of northerly air. Heavy showers fell. One of the galleys had sprung a leak, and was obliged to go home. On Wednesday the wind had backed to the west, and rose into a gale, blowing hard with a high sea. The waves broke into the stern galleries of the galleons, and the fleet was hove to. On Friday the storm was over, but there was still a long, heavy roll. The ships were unmanageable, and from the maintop of the *San Martin* forty sail were again not to be seen. The galleys, finding that in such water they were like to be swamped, had made away for the coast of France; the *Santa Aña*, the *Capitana* of the Biscay squadron, had disappeared completely, and was supposed to have been sunk. She had in fact lost her reckoning, and at last found her way into Havre. The rest of the missing ships proved only to be a few miles ahead. After a slight flutter, the Armada, shorn of its galleys and the *Santa Aña*, was again complete, and with the sky clearing from south-west, went on upon its way. As yet they had seen nothing—not a sail or a boat; but being on the enemy's coast they put themselves into fighting order. They were in three divisions. The Duke was in the centre with the main battle. Alonzo de Leyva led the advance as the post of honour. The rear was under Martinez de Recalde,

the formation being like an oblique crescent, or like the moon when it lies on its back, De Leyva and Recalde being at the two horns.

In this order they sailed slowly on through the day, still with nothing in sight, but knowing by observation and soundings that they were coming up to land. The sun on Friday, at noon, gave them 50 degrees, and the lead 56 fathoms. At four in the afternoon the grey ridge of the Lizard rose above the sea three leagues off. They were now in sight of the den of the dragon which they were to come to slay, and Medina Sidonia ran up to his masthead a special flag of his own, which had been embroidered for the occasion—Christ on the Cross, and Our Lady and the Magdalen on either side of Him. As the folds unrolled in the breeze, each ship in the fleet fired a broadside, and the ships' companies gathered and knelt on the deck to give thanks to the Almighty.

That evening the Duke despatched the last letter to the King, which for a month he had leisure to write. So far, he said, the enemy had not shown himself, but he was going forward in the dark; no word had come from Parma; before him was only the silent sea, and the long line of the Cornish coast, marked at intervals by columns of smoke which he knew to be alarm beacons. The sea that was so silent would soon be noisy enough. With a presentiment of danger, the Duke told the King that he must so far disregard his orders, that until Parma had communicated with him he proposed to halt at the Isle of Wight and to go no further. Sail was taken in that night. On the Saturday morning a despatch boat was sent away with the letter to the King, and the fleet crept on slowly and cautiously. They had hoped to fall in with a fishing-smack, but none were to be discovered; nor was it till Saturday night, or rather at one o'clock on the Sunday morning, that they were able to gather any information at all. At that hour, and not before, a pinnacle that had gone out for information came back with four Falmouth fishermen who had been fallen in with at sea. From them the Duke and the admirals learnt that Drake and Howard had come out on the Saturday morning from Plymouth harbour, and were lying in the Sound, or outside it, waiting for them. The burning beacons had brought notice on the Friday evening that the Armada was in sight, and the English had instantly got under way. The Spanish records and diaries say distinctly that from these fishermen they had gathered their first and only knowledge of the

English movements. The charge afterwards brought against the Duke, therefore, that he had learnt that Plymouth was undefended, that Oquendo and Recalde urged him to go in and take it, and that he refused and lost the opportunity, is proved to be without foundation. Very likely a council of admirals did advise that Plymouth should be attacked if they found Howard and Drake still in the Sound, for in the narrow space the ships would be close together, and the superior numbers of the Spaniards and their superior strength in small arms and musketry would be able to assert themselves. Medina Sidonia may have agreed, for all that any one can say to the contrary, but the opportunity was never allowed him. The English fleet was already outside, and the Duke could not enter till he had fought an action.

An hour after midnight, on Saturday, the Falmouth boatmen gave their information. Four hours later, directly off Ramhead, the two fleets were engaged. The air through the night had been light from the west. The water was smooth. At five o'clock on the Sunday morning, July 31, eleven large vessels were seen from the deck of the *San Martin* three miles to leeward, just off the Mewstone, manœuvring to recover the wind, which was beginning to freshen. Forty others were counted between the Armada and the land to the west of the Sound. The squadron first seen consisted of the Queen's ships under Lord Howard; the others were Drake and the privateers. The breeze rose rapidly. The Duke flew the consecrated standard, and signalled to the whole fleet to brace round their yards and hold the wind between the two English divisions. Howard, however, with apparent ease, went on to windward and joined Drake; both of them then stood out to sea behind the whole Armada, firing heavily into Recalde and the rearward Spanish squadron as they passed. Recalde tried hard to close, but Sir John Hawkins had introduced new lines into the construction of the English ships. The high castles at poop and stem had been reduced, the length increased, the beam diminished. They could sail perhaps within five points of the wind. They showed powers, at any rate, entirely new to Recalde, for they seemed to be able to keep at any distance which they pleased from him. They did not try to break his line or capture detached vessels. With their heavy guns, which he found to his cost to be of weightier metal, and to carry farther than his own, they poured their broadsides into him at their leisure, and he could make no tolerable reply. Alonzo de Leyva and Oquendo, seeing that Recalde was suffering severely,

went to his assistance, but only to experience themselves the effects of this novel method of naval combat and naval construction. To fight at a distance was contrary to Spanish custom, and was not held worthy of honourable men. But it was effective; it was perplexing, it was deadly. The engagement lasted on these conditions through the whole Sunday forenoon. The officers of the Armada did all that gallant men could achieve. They refused to recognise where the English superiority lay till it was forced upon them by torn rigging and shattered hulls. Recalde's own ship fired a hundred and twenty shot, and it was thought a great thing. But the English had fired five to the Spanish one, and the effect was the greater because, as in Rodney's action at Dominica, the galleons were crowded with troops, among whom shot and splinter had worked havoc. The Castilians and Biscayans were brave enough; there were no braver men in the world; but they were in a position where courage was of no use to them. They were perplexed and disturbed; and an officer present who describes the scene observes that '*este dia mostraronse de nuestra Armada algunos oficiales medrosos*'—this day some of the authorities of our fleet showed cowardice. The allusion was perhaps to the Duke, who had looked on and done nothing.

No prizes were taken. Drake and Howard understood their business too well to waste life upon single captures. Their purpose was to harass, shatter, and weaken the entire Armada, as opportunity might offer, with the least damage to themselves, till shot and weather, and the casualties likely to occur under such conditions, had reduced the fleets to something nearer to an equality. Tactics so novel perplexed the Spaniards. They had looked for difficulties, but they had counted with certainty on success if they could force the English into a general engagement. No wonder that they were unpleasantly startled at the result of the first experiment.

The action, if such it could be called when the Armada had been but a helpless target to the English guns, lasted till four in the afternoon. The south-west wind was blowing up, and the sea was rising. The two fleets had by that time driven past the opening into the Sound. The Duke could not have gone in if he had tried, nor could De Leyva himself, under such circumstances, have advised him to try; so, finding that he could do nothing, and was only throwing away life, he signalled from the *San Martin* to bear away up Channel. The misfortunes of the day, however, were not yet over. The Spanish squadrons endeavoured to resume

their proper positions, De Leyva leading and Recalde covering the rear. The English followed leisurely, two miles behind, and Recalde's vessel had suffered so much in the engagement that she was observed to be dropping back, and to be in danger of being left alone and overtaken. Pedro de Valdez, in the *Capitana* of the Andalusian squadron, one of the finest ships in the fleet, observing his old comrade in difficulties, bore up to help him. After such a day, the men, perhaps, were all of them disturbed, and likely to make mistakes in difficult manœuvres. In turning, the *Capitana* came into collision with the *Santa Catalina* and broke her bowsprit; the fore-topmast followed, and the ship became an unmanageable wreck. She had five hundred men on board, besides a considerable part of the money which had been sent for the use of the fleet. To desert such a vessel, and desert along with it one of the principal officers of the expedition, on the first disaster, would be an act of cowardice and dishonour not to be looked for in a Spanish nobleman. But night was coming on. To bear up was to risk a renewal of the fighting, for which the Duke had no stomach. He bore Don Pedro a grudge for having opposed him at Corunna, when he had desired to give up the expedition; Diego Florez, his adviser, had also his dislike for Don Pedro, and, to the astonishment of everyone, the signal was made that the fleet was not to stop, and that Don Pedro was to be left to his fate. De Leyva and Oquendo, unable to believe the order to be serious, hastened on board the *San Martin* to protest. The Duke hesitated; Diego Florez, however, said that to wait would be to risk the loss of the whole fleet, and by Diego Florez Philip had directed the Duke to be guided. Boats were sent back to bring off the treasure and the crew, but in the rising sea boats could do nothing. Don Pedro was deserted, overtaken, and of course captured, after a gallant resistance. The ship was carried into Dartmouth, and proved a valuable prize. Besides the money, there was found a precious store of powder, which the English sorely needed. Among other articles was a chest of swords, richly mounted, which the Duke was taking over to be presented to the English Catholic peers. Don Pedro himself was treated with the high courtesy which he deserved, to be ransomed at the end of a year, and was spared the ignominy of further service under his extraordinary commander-in-chief.

The loss of Don Pedro was not the last, and not the worst, calamity of the night. Soon after dark the air was shaken and the sky was lighted by an explosion in the centre of the Spanish

fleet. Oquendo's ship, *Our Lady of the Rose*, was blown up, and two hundred men, dead and wounded, were hurled into the sea. The wreck that was left was seen to be in a blaze, in which the rest on board were like to perish. Oquendo himself was absent. Some said it was an accident, others that it had been done by an Englishman in disguise, others that there had been some quarrel, and that one of the parties in a rage had flung a match into the magazine and sprung overboard. This time the Armada was rounded to; the burning ship was covered by the main body. The money on board, for each galleon had its own treasury, was taken out with the survivors of the crew, the hull was then abandoned to the English. A few casks of stores were still found in her hold which had escaped destruction. Shortly afterwards she sank.

From the day on which it sailed the fleet had been pursued by misfortune. Two such disasters following on the unexpected and startling features of the first engagement struck a chill through the whole force. The officers had lost confidence in a commander-in-chief whom they had ill liked from the first. The national honour was supposed to be touched by the desertion of Pedro de Valdez, who was universally loved and respected. The Duke was suspected to be no better than a poltroon. The next morning, August 1, broke heavily. The wind was gone, and the galleons were rolling in the swell. The enemy was hull down behind them, and the day was spent in repairing damages, knotting broken ropes, and nailing sheets of lead over the shot holes. Recalde's ship had suffered so much that the disposition of the squadrons was altered. De Leyva took charge of the rear in the *Rata Coronada*, where the danger was greatest. Don Martinez was passed forward into the advance, where he could attend to his hurts out of harm's way. The Duke in sour humour found fault all round, as incompetent commanders are apt to do. Orders were issued that each ship should keep a position definitely laid down; and any captain found out of his place was to be immediately hanged. Men will endure much from leaders whom they trust. Severity at such a moment was resented as ill-timed and undeserved. The day passed without incident. With the sunset the sea fell smooth, and not an air was stirring. The English fleet had come up, but was still a league behind. Both fleets were then off Portland. An hour after midnight De Leyva, Oquendo, and Recalde, burning with shame and indignation, came on board the *San Martin*, woke the Duke out of his sleep,

and told him that now was the time for him to repair his credit. By the light of the rising moon the English ships could be seen drifted apart with the tide, and deprived in the breathless calm of their superior advantages. The galleasses, with their oars, should be sent out instantly to attack single vessels. The dawn it was likely would bring a breeze from the east, when the galleons could gather way and support them. The Duke roused himself. Oquendo himself carried the orders to the captain of the galleasses, Don Hugo de Monçada. The galleasses prepared for action. The easterly air came up as was expected, and with the first clear light Howard was seen dead to leeward standing in for the land, and endeavouring, as he had done at Plymouth, to recover the weather-gage. The galleasses proved of small service after all, for the wind was soon too fresh; and they were useless. They could do nothing except in a calm. But the *San Martin* and her leading consorts bore down with all sail set. Howard being near the shore, had to tack and stand off to sea. He had thus to pass out through the centre of the whole Spanish fleet. The ships became intermixed, the *Ark Raleigh* was surrounded with enemies, and every Spanish captain's heart was bounding with the hope of boarding her. If they could once grapple they were justly confident in the numbers and courage of their men. So near the chances were at one moment, that Martin de Bretandona, the Levantine admiral, might have closed with one of the largest of the English ships 'if he could have been contented with less than the admiral.' But the wind freshened up with the day, and Don Martin and his friends saw vessels handled in a style which they had never seen before. It has been often confidently urged, as a reason for reducing the naval estimates, that Howard's fleet was manned by volunteers, and not by professional seamen. It is true that the English crews were not composed of men who were in the permanent service of the Crown, but never in the history of the country were a body of sailors gathered together more experienced in sailing ships and fighting them. They were the rovers of the ocean. To navigate the wildest seas, to fight Spaniards wherever they could meet them, had for thirty years been their occupation and their glory. Tacking, wearing, backing their canvas where there was no room to turn, they baffled every attack by the swiftness of their movements, and cleared their way out of the throng. Once more they drew away to windward, took at their leisure such positions as suited them, and, themselves beyond the reach of the feeble Spanish artillery, fired into the galleons

with their long heavy guns till five o'clock in the afternoon. This day the Duke personally behaved well. The *San Martin* was in the thickest of the fight, and received fifty shots in her hull. The famous standard was cut in two. The leaks were so many and so formidable that the divers were again at work all night plugging and stopping the holes. But the result was to show him, and to show them all, that the English ships were superior to theirs in speed and power and weight of artillery, and that to board them against their will was entirely hopeless. Another observation some of them made which was characteristic of the age. The galleons which had no gentlemen on board had been observed to hold off and keep out of range. In the evening the wind fell. With the last of it, Howard and Drake bore away and left them, as, with the calm, the galleasses might again be dangerous. Wednesday was breathless. The English wanted powder besides, having used what they had freely; and they were forced to wait for fresh supplies, which came up in the course of the afternoon. The Duke, as has been seen, was superstitious. So far the nuns' and the hermits' visions had not been realised, but, perhaps, his past ill-success had been sent only as a trial of his faith.

The 4th of August, Thursday, was St. Dominic's Day. The house of Guzman de Silva claimed St. Dominic as a member of their family; and St. Dominic, the Duke was assured, would now lend a hand to his suffering kinsman. The Isle of Wight, where he had announced to Philip that he intended to stop, was now under his lee. Once anchored in St. Helen's Road he would have the Armada in a safe shelter, where, if the English chose to attack him, they must come to closer quarters, as there would not be sea room for the manœuvres which had been so disastrous to him;¹ he could land ten thousand men and take the island; and, perplexed, agitated, and harassed by the unexpected course which events had taken with him, he probably still intended to act on this resolution, which was the wisest which he could have formed. He would probably have another action to fight before he could get in, but with St. Dominic's help he might this time have better fortune.

¹ The Duke's intention of stopping at the Isle of Wight was expressed by him as clearly as possible. Writing on July 30 to the King, he said he must advance 'poco a poco con toda el Armada junta en mis escuadrones hasta isla D'Wich y no pasar adelante hasta tener aviso del Duque de Parma. Porque si yo saliese de alli con esta, la costa de Flandes no habiendo en toda ella puerto ni abrigo ninguno para estas naves, con el primer temporal que les diese los echaria á los bancos, donde sin ningun remedio se habrian de perder; y por excusar este peligro tan evidente, me ha parecido no pasar adelante de aquella isla hasta saber lo que el Duque hace,' etc.—Duro, vol. ii., p. 221.

Howard and Drake seemed willing to give St. Dominic an opportunity of showing what he could do. They had received their powder. They had been reinforced by a few privateers who had come out from the Needles, and they showed a disposition to engage at a nearer distance than they had hitherto ventured. They were so far at a disadvantage that the wind was light, but, using what there was of it, the *Ark Raleigh* led straight down on the *San Martin*, ranged alongside, and opened a furious fire from her lower ports, and, as it appeared to the Spaniards, with heavier guns than she had used in the previous actions. Again the *San Martin* was badly cut up. Many of her men were killed and more were wounded. Seeing her hard pressed, Recalde and Oquendo came to the Duke's support. Oquendo drove his own ship between the *Ark* and the *San Martin*, receiving the broadside intended for her, and apparently causing some confusion on board the *Ark* by a shot of his own. At this moment the wind dropped altogether. Some eddy of the tide carried off the other English ships, leaving Howard surrounded once more by the enemy and in worse difficulties than in the fight off Portland. Three large galleons were close on board of him with Oquendo, the boldest officer of the Armada, in one of them. Eleven boats, to the amazement of the Spaniards, dropped over the *Ark's* side. Hundreds of men sprang into them, seized their oars, and took the *Ark* in tow, careless of the storm of musketry which was rattling upon them. She was already moving when the breeze rose again. Her sails filled and she flew away, dragging her own boats, and leaving behind the swiftest of the pursuing galleons as if they were at anchor.¹

Again the experience was the same. St. Dominic had been deaf or impotent, and a long day of fighting at disadvantage ended as usual. The ammunition of the Armada, which the Duke knew from the first to be insufficient, was giving out under the unprecedented demands upon it. Had he been wise he would still have made a desperate attempt to force his way into St. Helen's. His strength was not very much reduced. Though the loss of life had been considerable, Pedro de Valdez's ship was the only one which had been taken. To prevent him from entering the Solent the English must have closed with him, which they still hesitated to do, as they could not

¹ 'Se fué saliendo con tanta velocidad que el galeon *San Juan de Fernando* y otro ligerísimo, con ser los mas veleros de la Armada, que le fuéron dando caça, en comparacion se quedaron surtos.'

now tell how much hurt they had inflicted. The Duke had still this single chance of recovering his credit. He might have gone in. Had he done it, he might have taken the island, have even taken Portsmouth or Southampton ; at all events, he would have placed the Armada in a position out of which it would have been extremely difficult to dislodge it. But the unfortunate man had lost his head. He hated his work. He determined to look neither right nor left, but stick to Philip's own instructions, go on to the Straits of Dover as he had been told to do, send Parma notice of his arrival, and leave the rest to fate. He despatched a messenger to tell the Prince to expect him and to have his army embarked ready to cross on the instant of his arrival. He asked for a supply of fly-boats, gunboats worked with oars, which Parma could not send him, and for ammunition of which the Prince had none to dispose, expecting rather to be himself furnished from the fleet. Then, taking the worst resolution possible, and going forward to inevitable ruin, he signalled to his flock to follow him and pursued his way up Channel, followed by the English as before.

The Isle of Wight once passed, the worst danger to England was over. Lord Henry Seymour's squadron was in the Downs. Howard and Drake would soon join hands with him, and they could then concert what was next to be done.

The Armada drifted on before a light west wind through Thursday night, all Friday, and till Saturday afternoon. They were then at Calais and dropped anchor in the roads. Like a shadow which they could not shake off, the English clung to them behind. As they anchored, the English anchored also, a mile and a half astern, as if the infernal devils, *esta endemoniada gente*, had known what the Duke was going to do. Philip's advice had been to avoid the French coast, to keep the other side, and to bring up behind the North Foreland. The Duke, like Sancho, in the night adventure with the fulling hammers, was flying for safety under the skirts of Parma's coat, and thought that the nearer he could be to him the better it would be. He had thus brought his charge to the most dangerous roadstead in the Channel, with an enemy close to him who had less cause to fear the weather than he, and almost within gunshot of the French shore, when he did not know whether France was friend or foe. For the moment he thought himself secure. The wind was off the land. He looked to see the Prince of Parma and his boats coming out of Dunkirk at latest on the Monday morning. The French Governor came off to call before dark,

expressed his surprise to see him in a position where a shift of weather might be inconvenient, but offered him meanwhile the hospitalities of the port. On the Sunday morning, August 7, the purveyor of the fleet went on shore to buy vegetables. The men were employed cleaning up the guns and setting the ships in order after the confusion of the past week, and so much work had to be done that the daily rations were not served out and the Sunday holy day was a harassed fast. As the day wore on messengers came in from Parma. His transports were lying in Dunkirk, but nothing was ready, and the troops could not be embarked for a fortnight. He was himself at Bruges, but promised to hurry down to the port and to use all possible expedition. This was not consoling intelligence. In the uncertain weather the Calais roadstead was no place to linger in; and the Duke's anxieties were not diminished when the English squadron of the Downs under Seymour and Sir John Hawkins sailed in and anchored with their consorts. Hawkins—Achines they called him—was an object of peculiar terror to the Spaniards from his exploits in the West Indies. Next to Drake, or The Dragon, he was more feared than any other English seaman. The galleons were riding with two anchors on account of the tide. An English pinnace, carrying a light gun, ran down in the afternoon, sailed up to the *San Martin*, lodged a couple of shots in her hull, and went off again. Hugo de Monçada sent a ball after her from the *Capitana* galeass which cut a hole in her topsail, but she flew lightly away. The Spanish officers could not refuse their admiration for such airy impertinence.

If the Duke was uneasy the English commanders did not mean to give him time to recover himself. Calais Roads might be an awkward anchorage, but the weather might settle. August weather in the Channel often did settle. There had been a week of fighting and the Armada had got the worst of it, but still there it was, to outward appearance, not much damaged and within touch of the Prince of Parma. The backward state of Parma's preparations was unknown and unsuspected by the English commanders. Any morning he might be looked for, issuing out of Dunkirk with his fleet of gunboats, his army on board his barges, and making his way across the straits with the Armada to protect him. That Sunday evening Howard, Drake, Hawkins, Seymour, and Martin Frobisher held a consultation in the *Ark's* main cabin. The course which they intended to follow had probably been resolved on generally when Howard anchored so near the enemy on the

previous evening, and the meeting must have been only to arrange the method and moment of action. After nightfall, the flood tide would be running strong along the coast, and an intermittent but rising wind was coming up from the west. The Duke, as he restlessly paced his deck, observed lights moving soon after dark among the English vessels. He expected mischief of some kind and had ordered a strict look-out. About midnight eight large hulks were seen coming slowly down with tide and wind. Spars, ropes, and sails had been steeped in pitch, and as they approached nearer they burst out into flame and smoke. Straight on they came, for they had crews on board to direct the course, who only retreated to their boats when it was impossible to remain longer. The Spaniards, already agitated by the strange tricks of their English foes, imagined that the fire-ships were floating mines like those which had blown to pieces so many thousands of men at the bridge at Antwerp. The Duke, instead of sending launches to tow them clear, fired a signal for the whole fleet to get instantly under way. In the hurry and alarm, and with two anchors down, they had no time to weigh. They cut their cables, leaving buoys by which to recover them at daylight, and stood out into the Channel, congratulating themselves for the moment at having skilfully and successfully avoided a threatening danger. Medina Sidonia's intention had been to bring up again outside. He himself let go an anchor two miles off, and the best-appointed galleons followed his example. The main body, unfortunately, had been sent to sea so ill-provided that their third anchors, where they had any, were stowed away below and could not be brought up in time. Thus, when day dawned, the Duke found himself with less than half his force about him. The rest had drifted away on the tide and were six miles to leeward. The purpose of his enemy's 'traicion,' treason, as the Spaniards regarded it, was now apparent. The *San Martín*, and the vessels which remained with her, hoisted anchor and signalled to return to the roadstead. Seventy of the Duke's ships were far away, unable to obey if they had tried. The wind had drawn into the north-west; they were driving seemingly on the fatal banks, and when the Duke proposed to go after them the pilots told him that if he did they would probably be all lost together.

The spectacle on the shore was yet more dispiriting. The *Capitana* galeass, in clearing out from the fire-ships, had fouled the cable of another vessel. Monçada, who commanded her, knew as little of seamanship as his commander-in-chief. Her helm was jammed. An English crew with two hundred men

at the oars, would have found a way to manage her, but with galley slaves nothing could be done. She had drifted ashore under the town, and as the tide had gone back, was lying on her side on the sands, defending herself desperately against the crews of six English ships, one of them Howard's *Ark*, who were attacking her in their boats. Monçada fought like a hero till he was killed by a musket shot, the slaves jumped overboard, the surviving sailors and soldiers followed their example, and the galeass was taken and plundered.

To the Duke such a sight was sad enough ; but he had little time to attend to it. While Howard was losing time over the galeass, Drake and Hawkins had stooped on a nobler quarry. The great fleet was parted ; forty ships alone were present to defend the consecrated banner of Castile which was flying from the mainmast of the *San Martin*. Forty only, and no more, were engaged in the battle which stripped Spain of her supremacy at sea. But in those forty were Oquendo, De Leyva, Recalde, Bretendona, all that was best and bravest in the Spanish service. The first burst of the storm fell on the *San Martin* herself. Drake, determined to make the most of his opportunity, no longer held off at long range, but closed up, yardarm to yardarm ; not to make prizes of the galleons, but to destroy, sink, or disable them. The force which the English brought into the action was no longer unequal to that of the enemy. The air was soon so full of smoke that little could be seen from one ship of what was passing in another part of the action. Each captain fought his own vessel as he could, Medina giving no orders. He who, till the past few days, had never heard a shot fired in anger, found himself in the centre of the most furious engagement that history had a record of. He was accused afterwards of having shown cowardice. It was said that his cabin was stuffed with woolpacks, and that he lay himself during the fight in the middle of them. It was said, also, that he charged his pilot to take his ship where the danger was least. If he did, his pilot disobeyed his orders, for the *San Martin* was in the hottest part of the battle. It could not be otherwise. The flag which she carried to the end of it necessarily drew the heaviest fire upon her. The accounts of eye-witnesses charge the Duke only with the helpless incapacity which he had himself been the first to acknowledge. Though the *San Martin's* timbers were of double thickness, the shot at close range went through and through her 'enough to shatter to pieces a rock.' Her deck became a slaughter-house. Half her crew were killed or wounded, and she would have been sunk altogether had not Oquendo and De Leyva dashed

in and forced the English to turn their guns upon them, and enabled the unhappy Duke to crawl away and stop his leaks again. This was about noon; and from that time he himself saw no more till the engagement was over. Even from his maintop nothing could be made out for the smoke; but the air was shaking with the roar of the artillery. The Spanish officers behaved with the desperate heroism which became the countrymen of Cortez and Santa Cruz, and never did Spanish soldier or seaman distinguish himself more than on this tremendous day. There was no flinching, though the blood was seen streaming out of the scuppers. Priests went up and down under the hottest fire, crucifix in hand, confessing and absolving the dying. Not a ship struck her colours. They stood to their guns till their powder was all gone, and in half the ships not a round was left.

Happily for them, the English were no better furnished; their ammunition was all exhausted also, and the combat ended from mere incapacity to continue it. But the engagement from the first preserved the same character which had been seen in those which had preceded it. The Spaniards' courage was useless to them. Their ships could not turn or sail; their guns were crushed by the superior strength of the English artillery; they were out-matched in practical skill, and, close as the ships were to one another, they could not once succeed in fixing a grappling-iron in an English rigging. Thus, while their own losses were terrible, they could inflict but little in return. They had endured for five hours to be torn to pieces by cannon-shot—and that was all.

Before sunset the firing had ceased; the wind rose, the smoky canopy drifted away, and the *San Martin* and her comrades were seen floating, torn and tattered, *casi sin poder hacer mas resistencia*, almost powerless to resist longer. If the attack had continued for the two hours of daylight that remained, they must all have sunk or surrendered. A galleon in Recalde's squadron had gone down with all hands on board. The *San Philip* and the *San Matteo* were falling away dismasted and helpless towards the Dutch coast, where they afterwards went ashore. The condition of the rest was little better. The slaughter had been appalling from the crowd of soldiers who were on board. It had pleased God, for they could give no other explanation, that the enemy ceased to fire, drew off and left them, to bring their vessels to the wind, throw their dead overboard, and see to the hurts of the wounded, who were counted by thousands. They were so crippled that they could not bear their canvas, and unless

they could repair their damages swiftly, the north-west wind which was rapidly rising would drive them on the banks above Dunkirk. From the day on which they left Lisbon an inexorable fatality had pursued them. They had started in an inflated belief that they were under the especial care of the Almighty; one misfortune had trod on another's heel; the central misfortune of all, that they had been commanded by a fool, had begun to dawn on the whole of them; but the conviction came too late to be of use, and only destroyed what was left of discipline. The soldiers, finding that they outnumbered the seamen, snatched the control, chose their own course, and forced the pilots to steer as they pleased. The night passed miserably in examining into injuries, patching up what admitted of being mended, and discovering other hurts which could not be mended. The fresh water which they had brought from Corunna had been stowed on deck. The casks had been shot through in the action, and most of it was gone. The Ave Maria, if it was sung that evening, must have been a dirge, and the Buenos Dias of the ship boys in the morning a melancholy mockery. Yet seventy vessels out of the great fleet were still entire. They had not come up to join in the fight, because they could not. Their hulls were sound, their spars were standing, their crews untouched by any injury worse than despondency. The situation was not really desperate, and a capable chief with such a force at his disposition might have done something still to retrieve his country's credit, if only these ships could be made use of. Yet when day broke it seemed that a common fate would soon overtake those who had fought and those who so far had escaped.

They came together in the night. The day found them dragging heavily into the North Sea. The north-west wind was blowing hard, and setting them bodily on the banks. The bad sailers could not go to windward at all. Those which had been in the fight could not bear sail enough to hold a course which, when sound, they might have found barely possible. The crews were worn out. On the Sunday they had been dinnerless and supperless. All Monday they had been fighting, and all Monday night plugging shot-holes and fishing spars. The English fleet hung dark and threatening a mile distant on the weather quarter. The water was shoaling every moment. They could see the yellow foam when the waves were breaking on the banks. To wear round would be to encounter another battle, for which they had neither heart nor strength, while the English appeared to be contented to let the elements finish the work for them. The English

vessels drew more water, and would have grounded while the galleons were still afloat. It was enough for them if they could prevent the Armada from turning round and could force it to continue upon a course of which an hour or two would probably see the end. The *San Martin* and Oquendo's ship, the *San Juan*, were furthest out. The sounding-line on the *San Martin* gave at last but six fathoms; the vessels to leeward had only five. Some one, perhaps Diego Florez, advised the Duke to strike his flag and surrender. Report said that a boat was actually lowered to go off to Howard and make terms, and that Oquendo had prevented it from pushing off, by saying savagely that he would fling Diego Florez overboard. The Duke's friends, however, denied the charge, and insisted that he never lost his faith in God and God's glorious mother. Certain it is, that with death staring them in the face and themselves helpless, men and officers betook themselves to prayer as the only refuge left, and apparently the prayer was answered. A person who was on the *San Martin* described the scene. Every one was in despair, he said, and only looking for destruction. Had the enemy known the condition in which they were, and borne down and attacked them, they must all have given in, for they were without power to defend themselves. At the last extremity, somewhere about noon, 'God was pleased to work a miracle.' The wind shifted, backing to the south-west, and ceased to jam them down upon the sands. With eased sheets they were able to point their heads northwards and draw out into the deep water. The enemy followed, still keeping at the same distance, but showed no further disposition to meddle with them; and the Armada breathed again, and huddled together like a flock of frightened sheep. A miracle they thought it. Being pious Catholics and living upon faith in the supernatural they recovered heart, and began to think that God's anger was spent, and that He would now be propitious. He had been with them when they thought they were deserted. He had brought the survivors of them 'through the most terrible cannonade ever seen in the history of the world' (*la mas fuerte bateria y major que los nacidos han visto ni los escriptores han escrito*). He had perhaps been disciplining them to do His work after all. Death at any rate was no longer before their eyes.

Alas! if the change of wind was really an act of Providence in answer to prayer, Providence was playing with their credulity, and reserving them deliberately for an end still more miserable. This Tuesday, August 9, was the day of Philip's patron saint, St.

Lawrence, whose arm he had lately added to his sacred treasures in the Escorial. In the afternoon a council of war was again held on board the flag-ship, consisting of the Duke, Alonzo de Leyva, Recalde, Don Francisco de Bobadilla, and Diego Florez. They had little pleasant to say to each other. Oquendo was at first absent, but came in while they were still deliberating. O Señor Oquendo, they cried, 'que haremos,' 'What shall we do?' 'Do!' he replied, 'turn round and fight again.' It was the answer of a gallant man who would rather die than be disgraced. But the Duke had to consider how to save what was left of his charge, and the alternative had to be considered. They were before the wind, running right up the North Sea. The Duke explained that every cartridge had been spent in the vessels which had been engaged, and that, although some were left in the rest of the fleet, the supply was miserably short. Their ships were leaking. Half the sailors and half the artillerymen were killed or wounded. The Prince of Parma was not ready, and they had found by experience that they were no match for the English in fighting. The coast of Spain was at present unprotected, and unless they could carry the fleet home in safety would be in serious danger. The Duke's own opinion was that they ought to make haste back, and by the sea route round the North of Scotland and Ireland. To return through the Straits implied more battles, and in their battered state it was doubtful whether they could work their way as the wind stood, even if the enemy left them alone.

Flight, for it was nothing else, after such high expectations and loud prayers and boastings, flight after but a week's conflict, seemed to the old companions of Santa Cruz an intolerable shame. De Leyva was doubtful. He admitted, as the Duke said, that the English were too strong for them. They had done their best and it had not availed. His own ship would hardly float, and he had not thirty cartridges left. Recalde and Bobadilla supported Oquendo, and insisted that, at whatever risk, they must endeavour to recover Calais Roads. They were old sailors, who had weathered many a storm, and fought in many a battle. The chances of war had been against them so far, but would not be against them always. If the English fleet could go down Channel, it was not to be supposed that a Spanish fleet could not, and if they were to return home the Channel was the nearest road. If the worst came, an honourable death was better than a disgraceful flight.

Spanish history has accused Medina Sidonia of having been the cause that the bolder course was rejected. Independent contemporary witnesses say that it was made impossible by the despondency of the men, who could not be induced to encounter the English again.

Though he determined against returning through the Channel, more than one alternative was still open to him. The harbours of Holland and Zealand were in the hands of Dutch rebels. But there was the Elbe, there was the Baltic, there was Norway. If the Duke had been a man of daring and genius there was the Frith of Forth. Had he anchored off Leith and played his cards judiciously, there was still a possibility for him to achieve something remarkable. The Duke, however, probably knew that his master had intended to exclude the King of Scots from the English succession, and may have doubted the reception which he might meet with. Or, and perhaps more probably, he was sick of a command which had brought him nothing but defeat and distraction, and was only eager to surrender his trust at the earliest possible moment.

Thus forlorn and miserable, the great Armada, which was to have made an end of the European Reformation, was set upon its course for the Orkneys, from thence to bear away to the West of Ireland, and so round to Spain. Drake and Howard, not conceiving that their object would be so lightly abandoned, and ignorant of the condition to which the enemy was reduced, followed them at a distance to see what they would do, and on the Wednesday had almost taken Recalde, whose disabled ship was lagging behind. The Duke, however, did not dare to desert a second admiral. He waited for Recalde to come up, and the English did not interfere. In fact they could not. Owing to Elizabeth's parsimony, their magazines were hardly better furnished than the Spanish. In pursuing the Armada they acknowledged that they were but 'putting on a brag' to frighten the Duke out of turning back. They could not have seriously attacked him again, at all events for many days, and the bravest course would after all have proved the safest for him. As it was, he saved Recalde, and went on thanking Providence for having induced the English to let him alone.

J. A. FROUDE.

(To be continued.)

Seville.

SEVILLA! City of the Sun,
 I fly to thee, my task is done :
 Weary heart and weary brain,
 Thou canst make them young again.
 Here, beneath this cloudless blue,
 All things wear a festal hue ;
 Life seems but a painted thing,
 An insect with a gaudy wing,
 A full-blown rose, a lover's dream,
 The light that sparkles on the stream.

Long chequered years have pass'd away,
 Once more among those scenes I stray ;
 And all below, around, above,
 Still tells of careless joy or love :
 Sunburnt dancers nightly met
 With gipsy song and castanet,
 Where the coloured lanthorns gleam
 By the Guadalquivir's stream,
 And the white mantilla's flow
 Softer than the falling snow,
 And the deftly quivering fan
 Telling more than language can,
 And the roses in the hair,
 And the scent that loads the air,
 Rising from the orange-grove
 Where belated lovers rove
 Through the balmy nights of spring ;
 When the birds most sweetly sing,
 But not half so sad a tale
 As our Northern nightingale.

Lovely city, let me be
For a time at one with thee ;
From my heart all sadness chase :
Free me for a little space
From the tumult and the strife
And the seriousness of life ;
Let thy Northern sisters boast
They can work and win the most :
Wealth and wisdom are their dower ;
Thine is the enchanter's power—
Thine the gift to soothe and sway,
Charming all our cares away.

W. E. H. LECKY.

The Ebony Frame.

TO be rich is a luxurious sensation—the more so when you have plumbed the depths of hard-up-ness as a Fleet Street hack, a picker-up of unconsidered pars, a reporter, an unappreciated journalist—all callings utterly inconsistent with one's family feeling and one's direct descent from the Dukes of Picardy.

When my Aunt Dorcas died and left me five hundred a year and a furnished house in Chelsea, I felt that life had nothing left to offer except immediate possession of the legacy. Even Mildred Mayhew, whom I had hitherto regarded as my life's light, became less luminous. I was not engaged to Mildred, but I lodged with her mother, and I sang duets with Mildred, and gave her gloves when it would run to it, which was seldom. She was a dear good girl, and I meant to marry her some day. It is very nice to feel that a good little woman is thinking of you—it helps you in your work—and it is pleasant to know she will say 'Yes' when you say 'Will you?'

But, as I say, my legacy almost put Mildred out of my head, especially as she was staying with friends in the country just then.

Before the first gloss was off my new mourning I was seated in my aunt's own armchair in front of the fire in the dining-room of my own house. My own house! It was grand, but rather lonely. I *did* think of Mildred just then.

The room was comfortably furnished with oak and leather. On the walls hung a few fairly good oil-paintings, but the space above the mantel-piece was disfigured by an exceedingly bad print, 'The Trial of Lord William Russell,' framed in a dark frame. I got up to look at it. I had visited my aunt with dutiful regularity, but I never remembered seeing this frame before. It was not intended for a print, but for an oil-painting. It was of fine ebony, beautifully and curiously carved.

I looked at it with growing interest, and when my aunt's

housemaid—I had retained her modest staff of servants—came in with the lamp, I asked her how long the print had been there.

‘Mistress only bought it two days afore she was took ill,’ she said; ‘but the frame—she didn’t want to buy a new one—so she got this out of the attic. There’s lots of curious old things there, sir.’

‘Had my aunt had this frame long?’

‘Oh, yes, sir. It come long afore I did, and I’ve been here seven years come Christmas. There was a picture in it—that’s upstairs too—but it’s that black and ugly it might as well be a chimley-back.’

I felt a desire to see this picture. What if it were some priceless old master in which my aunt’s eyes had only seen rubbish?

Directly after breakfast next morning I paid a visit to the lumber-room.

It was crammed with old furniture enough to stock a curiosity shop. All the house was furnished solidly in the early Victorian style, and in this room everything not in keeping with the ‘drawing-room suite’ ideal was stowed away. Tables of papier-maché and mother-of-pearl, straight-backed chairs with twisted feet and faded needlework cushions, firescreens of old-world design, old bureaux with brass handles, a little work-table with its faded moth-eaten silk flutings hanging in disconsolate shreds: on these and the dust that covered them blazed the full daylight as I drew up the blinds. I promised myself a good time in re-enshrining these household gods in my parlour, and promoting the Victorian suite to the attic. But at present my business was to find the picture as ‘black as the chimley-back;’ and presently, behind a heap of hideous still-life studies, I found it.

Jane the housemaid identified it at once. I took it downstairs carefully and examined it. No subject, no colour were distinguishable. There was a splodge of a darker tint in the middle, but whether it was figure or tree or house no man could have told. It seemed to be painted on a very thick panel bound with leather. I decided to send it to one of those persons who pour the waters of eternal youth on rotting family portraits—mere soap and water Mr. Besant tells us it is; but even as I did so the thought occurred to me to try my own restorative hand at a corner of it.

My bath-sponge, soap, and nailbrush vigorously applied for a few seconds showed me that there was no picture to clean! Bare oak presented itself to my persevering brush. I tried the other side, Jane watching me with indulgent interest. Same result.

Then the truth dawned on me. Why was the panel so thick? I tore off the leather binding, and the panel divided and fell to the ground in a cloud of dust. There were two pictures—they had been nailed face to face. I leaned them against the wall, and next moment I was leaning against it myself.

For one of the pictures was myself—a perfect portrait—no shade of expression or turn of feature wanting. Myself—in a cavalier dress, ‘love-locks and all!’ When had this been done? And how, without my knowledge? Was this some whim of my aunt’s?

‘Lor’, sir!’ the shrill surprise of Jane at my elbow; ‘what a lovely photo it is! Was it for a fancy ball, sir?’

‘Yes,’ I stammered. ‘I—I don’t think I want anything more now. You can go.’

She went; and I turned, still with my heart beating violently, to the other picture. This was a woman of the type of beauty beloved of Burne Jones and Rossetti—straight nose, low brows, full lips, thin hands, large deep luminous eyes. She wore a black velvet gown. It was a full-length portrait. Her arms rested on a table beside her, and her head on her hands; but her face was turned full forward, and her eyes met those of the spectator bewilderingly. On the table by her were compasses and instruments whose uses I did not know, books, a goblet, and a miscellaneous heap of papers and pens. I saw all this afterwards. I believe it was a quarter of an hour before I could turn my eyes away from hers. I have never seen any other eyes like hers. They appealed, as a child’s or a dog’s do; they commanded, as might those of an empress.

‘Shall I sweep up the dust, sir?’ Curiosity had brought Jane back. I acceded. I turned from her my portrait. I kept between her and the woman in the black velvet. When I was alone again I tore down ‘The Trial of Lord William Russell,’ and I put the picture of the woman in its strong ebony frame.

Then I wrote to a frame-maker for a frame for my portrait. It had so long lived face to face with this beautiful witch that I had not the heart to banish it from her presence; from which it will be perceived that I am by nature a somewhat sentimental person.

The new frame came home, and I hung it opposite the fireplace. An exhaustive search among my aunt’s papers showed no explanation of the portrait of myself, no history of the portrait of the woman with the wonderful eyes. I only learned that all the old furniture together had come to my aunt at the death of

my great-uncle, the head of the family; and I should have concluded that the resemblance was only a family one, if everyone who came in had not exclaimed at the 'speaking likeness.' I adopted the 'fancy ball' explanation.

And there, one might suppose, the matter of the portraits ended. One might suppose it, that is, if there were not evidently a good deal more written here about it. However, to me, then, the matter seemed ended.

I went to see Mildred; invited her and her mother to come and stay with me. I rather avoided glancing at the picture in the ebony frame. I could not forget, nor remember without singular emotion, the look in the eyes of that woman when mine first met them. I shrank from repeating that look.

I reorganised the house somewhat, preparing for Mildred's visit. I turned the dining-room into a drawing-room. I brought down much of the old-fashioned furniture, and, after a long day of arranging and re-arranging, I sat down before the fire, and, lying back in a pleasant languor, I idly raised my eyes to the picture. I met her dark, deep, hazel eyes, and once more my gaze was held fixed as by a strong magic—the kind of fascination that keeps one sometimes staring for whole minutes into one's own eyes in the glass. I gazed into her eyes, and felt my own dilate, pricked with a smart like the smart of tears.

'I wish,' I said, 'oh, how I wish you were a woman, and not a picture! Come down! Ah, come down!'

I laughed at myself as I spoke; but even as I laughed I held out my arms.

I was not sleepy; I was not drunk. I was as wide awake and as sober as ever was a man in this world. And yet, as I held out my arms, I saw the eyes of the picture dilate, her lips tremble—if I were to be hanged for saying it, it is true. Her hands moved slightly, and a sort of flicker of a smile passed over her face.

I sprang to my feet. 'This won't do,' I said, still aloud. 'Firelight does play strange tricks. I'll have the lamp.'

I pulled myself together and made for the bell. My hand was on it, when I heard a sound behind me, and turned—the bell still unring. The fire had burned low, and the corners of the room were deeply shadowed; but, surely, there—behind the tall worked chair—was something darker than a shadow.

'I must face this out,' I said, 'or I shall never be able to face myself again.' I left the bell, I seized the poker, and battered the dull coals to a blaze. Then I stepped back resolutely, and looked up at the picture. The ebony frame was empty! From

the shadow of the chair came a silken rustle, and out of the shadow the woman of the picture was coming—coming towards me.

I hope I shall never again know a moment of such blank and absolute terror as that. I could not have moved or spoken to save my life. Either all the known laws of nature were nothing, or I was mad. I stood trembling, but, I am thankful to remember, I stood still, while the black velvet gown swept across the hearth-rug towards me.

Next moment a hand touched me—a hand soft, warm, and human—and a low voice said, 'You called me. I am here.'

At that touch and that voice the world seemed to give a sort of bewildering half-turn. I hardly know how to express it, but at once it seemed not awful—not even unusual—for portraits to become flesh—only most natural, most right, most unspeakably fortunate.

I laid my hand on hers. I looked from her to my portrait. I could not see it in the firelight.

'We are not strangers,' I said.

'Oh, no, not strangers.' Those luminous eyes were looking up into mine—those red lips were near me. With a passionate cry—a sense of having suddenly recovered life's one great good, that had seemed wholly lost—I clasped her in my arms. She was no ghost—she was a woman—the only woman in the world.

'How long,' I said, 'O love—how long since I lost you?'

She leaned back, hanging her full weight on the hands that were clasped behind my head.

'How can I tell how long? There is no time in hell,' she answered.

It was not a dream. Ah, no—there are no such dreams. I wish to God there could be. When in dreams do I see her eyes, hear her voice, feel her lips against my cheek, hold her hands to my lips, as I did that night—the supreme night of my life? At first we hardly spoke. It seemed enough,

after long grief and pain,
To feel the arms of my true love
Round me once again.

It is very difficult to tell this story. There are no words to express the sense of glad reunion, the complete realisation of every hope and dream of a life, that came upon me as I sat with my hand in hers and looked into her eyes.

How could it have been a dream, when I left her sitting in the straight-backed chair, and went down to the kitchen to tell

the maids I should want nothing more—that I was busy, and did not wish to be disturbed; when I fetched wood for the fire with my own hands, and, bringing it in, found her still sitting there—saw the little brown head turn as I entered, saw the love in her dear eyes; when I threw myself at her feet and blessed the day I was born, since life had given me this?

Not a thought of Mildred: all the other things in my life were a dream—this, its one splendid reality.

‘I am wondering,’ she said after awhile, when we had made such cheer each of the other as true lovers may after long parting—‘I am wondering how much you remember of our past.’

‘I remember nothing,’ I said. ‘Oh, my dear lady, my dear sweetheart—I remember nothing but that I love you—that I have loved you all my life.’

‘You remember nothing—really nothing?’

‘Only that I am yours; that we have both suffered; that—Tell me, my mistress dear, all that you remember. Explain it all to me. Make me understand. And yet—No, I don’t want to understand. It is enough that we are together.’

If it was a dream, why have I never dreamed it again?

She leaned down towards me, her arm lay on my neck and drew my head till it rested on her shoulder. ‘I am a ghost, I suppose,’ she said, laughing softly; and her laughter stirred memories which I just grasped at, and just missed. ‘But you and I know better, don’t we? I will tell you everything you have forgotten. We loved each other—ah! no, you have not forgotten that—and when you came back from the war we were to be married. Our pictures were painted before you went away. You know I was more learned than women of that day. Dear one, when you were gone they said I was a witch. They tried me. They said I should be burned. Just because I had looked at the stars and had gained more knowledge than they, they must needs bind me to a stake and let me be eaten by the fire. And you far away!’

Her whole body trembled and shrank. O love, what dream would have told me that my kisses would soothe even that memory?

‘The night before,’ she went on, ‘the devil did come to me. I was innocent before—you know it, don’t you? And even then my sin was for you—for you—because of the exceeding love I bore you. The devil came, and I sold my soul to eternal flame. But I got a good price. I got the right to come back, through

my picture (if anyone looking at it wished for me), as long as my picture stayed in its ebony frame. That frame was not carved by man's hand. I got the right to come back to you. Oh, my heart's heart, and another thing I won, which you shall hear anon. They burned me for a witch, they made me suffer hell on earth. Those faces, all crowding round, the crackling wood and the smell of the smoke——'

'Oh, love! no more—no more.'

'When my mother sat that night before my picture she wept, and cried, "Come back, my poor lost child!" And I went to her, with glad leaps of heart. Dear, she shrank from me, she fled, she shrieked and moaned of ghosts. She had our pictures covered from sight and put again in the ebony frame. She had promised me my picture should stay always there. Ah, through all these years your face was against mine.'

She paused.

'But the man you loved?'

'You came home. My picture was gone. They lied to you, and you married another woman; but some day I knew you would walk the world again and that I should find you.'

'The other gain?' I asked.

'The other gain,' she answered slowly, 'I gave my soul for. It is this. If you also will give up your hopes of heaven I can remain a woman, I can move in your world—I can be your wife. Oh, my dear, after all these years, at last—at last.'

'If I sacrifice my soul,' I said slowly, with no thought of the imbecility of such talk in our 'so-called nineteenth century'—'if I sacrifice my soul, I win you? Why, love, it's a contradiction in terms. You *are* my soul.'

Her eyes looked straight into mine. Whatever might happen, whatever did happen, whatever may happen, our two souls in that moment met, and became one.

'Then you choose—you deliberately choose—to give up your hopes of heaven for me, as I gave up mine for you?'

'I decline,' I said, 'to give up my hope of heaven on any terms. Tell me what I must do, that you and I may make our own heaven here—as now, my dear love.'

'I will tell you to-morrow,' she said. 'Be alone here to-morrow night—twelve is ghost's time, isn't it?—and then I will come out of the picture and never go back to it. I shall live with you, and die, and be buried, and there will be an end of me. But we shall live first, my heart's heart.'

I laid my head on her knee. A strange drowsiness overcame me. Holding her hand against my cheek, I lost consciousness. When I awoke the grey November dawn was glimmering, ghost-like, through the uncurtained window. My head was pillowed on my arm, which rested—I raised my head quickly—ah! not on my lady's knee, but on the needleworked cushion of the straight-backed chair. I sprang to my feet. I was stiff with cold, and dazed with dreams, but I turned my eyes on the picture. There she sat, my lady, my dear love. I held out my arms, but the passionate cry I would have uttered died on my lips. She had said twelve o'clock. Her lightest word was my law. So I only stood in front of the picture and gazed into those grey-green eyes till tears of passionate happiness filled my own.

'Oh, my dear, my dear, how shall I pass the hours till I hold you again?'

No thought, then, of my whole life's completion and consummation being a dream.

I staggered up to my room, fell across my bed, and slept heavily and dreamlessly. When I awoke it was high noon. Mildred and her mother were coming to lunch.

I remembered, at one shock, Mildred's coming and her existence.

Now, indeed, the dream began.

With a penetrating sense of the futility of any action apart from *her*, I gave the necessary orders for the reception of my guests. When Mildred and her mother came I received them with cordiality; but my genial phrases all seemed to be some one else's. My voice sounded like an echo; my heart was other where.

Still, the situation was not intolerable until the hour when afternoon tea was served in the drawing-room. Mildred and her mother kept the conversational pot boiling with a profusion of genteel commonplaces, and I bore it, as one can bear mild purgatories when one is in sight of heaven. I looked up at my sweetheart in the ebony frame, and I felt that anything that might happen, any irresponsible imbecility, any bathos of boredom, was nothing, if, after it all, *she* came to me again.

And yet, when Mildred, too, looked at the portrait, and said, 'What a fine lady! One of your flames, Mr. Devigne?' I had a sickening sense of impotent irritation, which became absolute torture when Mildred—how could I ever have admired that chocolate-box barmaid style of prettiness?—threw herself

into the high-backed chair, covering the needlework with her ridiculous flounces, and added, 'Silence gives consent! Who is it, Mr. Devigne? Tell us all about her: I am sure she has a story.'

Poor little Mildred, sitting there smiling, serene in her confidence that her every word charmed me—sitting there with her rather pinched waist, her rather tight boots, her rather vulgar voice—sitting in the chair where my dear lady had sat when she told me her story! I could not bear it.

'Don't sit there,' I said; 'it's not comfortable!'

But the girl would not be warned. With a laugh that set every nerve in my body vibrating with annoyance, she said, 'Oh, dear! mustn't I even sit in the same chair as your black-velvet woman?'

I looked at the chair in the picture. It *was* the same; and in her chair Mildred was sitting. Then a horrible sense of the reality of Mildred came upon me. Was all this a reality after all? But for fortunate chance might Mildred have occupied, not only her chair, but her place in my life? I rose.

'I hope you won't think me very rude,' I said; 'but I am obliged to go out.'

I forget what appointment I alleged. The lie came readily enough.

I faced Mildred's pouts with the hope that she and her mother would not wait dinner for me. I fled. In another minute I was safe, alone, under the chill, cloudy autumn sky—free to think, think, think of my dear lady.

I walked for hours along streets and squares; I lived over again and again every look, word, and hand-touch—every kiss; I was completely, unspeakably happy.

Mildred was utterly forgotten: my lady of the ebony frame filled my heart and soul and spirits.

As I heard eleven boom through the fog, I turned, and went home.

When I got to my street, I found a crowd surging through it, a strong red light filling the air.

A house was on fire! Mine!

I elbowed my way through the crowd.

The picture of my lady—that, at least, I could save!

As I sprang up the steps, I saw, as in a dream—yes, all this was *really* dream-like—I saw Mildred leaning out of the first-floor window, wringing her hands.

'Come back, sir,' cried a fireman ; we'll get the young lady out right enough.'

But *my* lady? I went on up the stairs, cracking, smoking, and as hot as hell, to the room where her picture was. Strange to say, I only felt that the picture was a thing we should like to look on through the long glad wedded life that was to be ours. I never thought of it as being one with her.

As I reached the first floor I felt arms round my neck. The smoke was too thick for me to distinguish features.

'Save me !' a voice whispered. I clasped a figure in my arms, and, with a strange dis-ease, bore it down the shaking stairs and out into safety. It was Mildred. I knew *that* directly I clasped her.

'Stand back,' cried the crowd.

'Everyone's safe,' cried a fireman.

The flames leaped from every window. The sky grew redder and redder. I sprang from the hands that would have held me. I leaped up the steps. I crawled up the stairs. Suddenly the whole horror of the situation came on me. '*As long as my picture remains in the ebony frame.*' What if picture and frame perished together?

I fought with the fire, and with my own choking inability to fight with it. I pushed on. I must save my picture. I reached the drawing-room.

As I sprang in I saw my lady—I swear it—through the smoke and the flames, hold out her arms to me—to me—who came too late to save her, and to save my own life's joy. I never saw her again.

Before I could reach her, or cry out to her, I felt the floor yield beneath my feet, and fell into the fiery hell below.

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How did they save me? What does that matter? They saved me somehow—curse them. Every stick of my aunt's furniture was destroyed. My friends pointed out that, as the furniture was heavily insured, the carelessness of a nightly-studious housemaid had done me no harm.

No harm !

That was how I won and lost my only love.

I deny, with all my soul in the denial, that it was a dream. There are no such dreams. Dreams of longing and pain there are

in plenty, but dreams of complete, of unspeakable happiness—ah, no—it is the rest of life that is the dream.

But if I think that, why have I married Mildred, and grown stout and dull and prosperous?

I tell you it is all *this* that is the dream; my dear lady only is the reality. And what does it matter what one does in a dream?

E. NESBIT.

Rival Mechanics—Nature and Man : A Students' Symposium.

WE—a party of students—were sitting after dinner discussing natural and human contrivances, their similarities and differences, when the discussion drifted into the question whether man, in his contrivings and inventions, voluntarily or involuntarily copied from nature, or whether he always followed his own lead? After a brisk argument, we seemed to arrive, by common consent, at one point of agreement—namely, that there is no instrument of a motor kind, perhaps of any kind, made by man that has not its counterpart made by nature without the intervention of man.

‘Stay!’ cried one who appeared to be doubtful. ‘Where in nature will you find a revolving wheel?’

‘My dear fellow,’ replied another, ‘you are sitting on one, and it is turning you round at the rate of a thousand miles an hour.’

But when wheels were invented by man the earth, as a revolving globe, was not understood; therefore, once more, does man copy or follow his own lead? I must not try to enter into all that was said, pro and con, on this curious topic, but I may venture to sketch out in a general way the course and result of our deliberations.

The valve, the lever, the pulley, the screw, the wheel, the tube, the bladder or vesicle, the column, the cord, the joint, the sucker, the jet, and numerous other things common to nature as a worker and to man as a worker, were brought, one by one, into our argument. We tried to reckon up how many objects of everyday life—spoons, combs, knives, keels, ribs of boats, hollow columns, and such like—had their counterparts in the skeletons of animals. One of us adduced over twenty implements as springing from the bony skeletons of different animals, and at this early stage of our symposium a majority of us were

inclined to think that human inventive skill, starting from some simple object lesson, is invariably an imitative skill, a copy from something supplied by the primary mechanic and designer, nature. There was, however, a minority of us who held that natural inventive skill and human inventive skill are independent of each other, and on this subject our debate was continued, but on a scale in which certain points were conceded which very considerably narrowed the argument. We agreed that man can never be claimed to have invented any principle of a mechanical kind that has not been already produced by nature. It was admitted that, at his best, man merely recreates the created, and yet that, had it so been that he had made the study of all natural mechanism his primary study, he might not by such simple imitation have produced all he has contrived. It might perhaps be that in some things of human invention there is imitation of natural things, but it is not the less true that the human faculty for invention is independent, and that man often reproduces what exists in nature without being conscious of the fact, just as two men often think out the same invention entirely independently of each other. A large number of illustrations of this kind were speedily thought of, like the valves, floodgates, joints, and levers found in natural mechanisms, but invented by man long before they were known to have pre-existed in nature.

The evidence of the independency of man as a rival mechanic with nature, under the limitations specified, changed the course of our discussion. If man were merely a copyist, he would have shown himself to have been a splendid naturalist before being a splendid mechanic. The reverse is the truth. Man is a poor naturalist; in fact, there are few if any subjects in which he is so uninformed as natural history and natural mechanism. How few know even in these days the simple problem of the circulation of the blood. On the other hand, he is unusually well informed on the subject of ordinary mechanism—so informed that the masses of his kindred live by their knowledge of some mechanical art or labour. As a rule, too, when he has tried most earnestly to follow nature in her devices he has failed most signally. We observe this in his attempts to imitate flight. Since the time of Borelli he has been endeavouring to construct a flying-machine after the manner of a bird, but has failed in this art of imitation up to the present hour. He has not failed in inventing plans for carrying himself through the air, and making the air support considerable weights; but they are processes essentially his own; and although

one of them may be compared with the floating of fish in water, it really is not derived from that natural method. They are distinct arts, essentially human, and one of them, the kite, might probably, as a practical mechanism, have come much nearer to success than obtains at present, if the temptation to imitate the flight invented by nature had not interfered with its development.

The best evidence, however, of the independency of human invention was seen in what may be called its cumulative character. Inventions from the hand of man are always cumulative. He begins on his own account, taking nothing whatever from the hand of Jove. He begins from small things. He progresses from small to large, and at last attains perfection. We could find no grand development in human mechanism that had not been carried out in this manner, step by step. Some little, it may be some childish, observation was first made; then came an advance, hardly perceptible, and then another, in perpetual onward ascending experiment. The mechanical history of electricity was found to be eloquent of this fact. Children rub together bits of amber picked up from the ground, and find that when rubbed these small pieces of waxlike substance are excited to attract particles of light substances like straws and feathers. Could anything be more elementary or seemingly further removed from the mighty mechanical developments of the electrical powers which now surround us? Yet that simple frictional play was the starting-point of all we now possess, electrically. It lay by as a child's sport for ages—lay by for Sir Isaac Newton himself to look at, removed only to a box with a glass lid containing paper figures which would move when the glass surface was excited by friction. A little later, and the flat glass surface became a tube, a globe, a globe revolving on a frame, a machine, an electrical battery, and so steadily onwards until, each step marked by a gentle advancement upon advancement, lightning and thunder themselves were the inventions of man as well as of nature.

In these independent works of man, he, as an artificer, has not only shown himself the rival of nature, but in some instances one more careful, more calculating, and, it may almost be said, more exact. He has even detected mathematical inaccuracies in natural mechanics, and has been forced to observe that in the development of animal bodies certain imperfections, amounting to dangerous imperfections, have been permitted, as if some details of constructive skill had been left unfinished and liable to failure in action under emergency. But these are mere details. As a working

power nature holds firm possession of primary master powers. She supplies energy and that course and manner of its direction called force. She supplies all elementary materials, so that man has no independency in regard either to primary powers, primary laws, or primary matter. It is not until he enters into rivalry with nature in the secondary arts of mechanical configuration and adaptation of things made for human purposes, that the comparison of human and natural skill comes into play.

Another fact opened itself to us as we studied the works of the rival artisans, namely, that however industriously, and however independently, the human artisan pursues his way, he eventually discovers, in respect to every one of his labours, that he has been anticipated by nature. So, although we may say that man on his own part is entirely original, we may say, with equal justice, that he has always been forestalled and is never original. This view was challenged at our symposium, but no one succeeded in finding an instrument or invention of man in which there was not some anticipated plan in natural designs. In was in details that differences were detected, differences that might exist when the materials used for construction by the rival constructors were one and the same.

The planet, as the storehouse of material for every construction, natural or human, yields a certain number of elements. About sixty-four may be accepted as the number hitherto discovered, and these certainly are all that are of any mass or quantity. Out of these for structural and working use only about one-fourth are employed either by nature or by man. Nature uses largely four gases: oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, chlorine. She uses also largely two inorganic non-metallic bodies, carbon and sulphur. She uses metals, calcium and iron. She uses one metalloid, phosphorus. Man in his work uses all these elements with some others. Nature uses iron sparingly, man uses it largely. Nature uses the metal calcium largely, letting it enter into the construction of the bone of every skeleton of animal; man uses calcium in a rough way in the formation of buildings in the compound form of lime, together with other metals in the grand storehouse, tin, copper, and—lately—aluminium, substances which nature shows no preference for in any of her artistic and mechanical works. Man also uses zinc, lead, and mercury, for which nature has no special employment that is obvious to us. Man uses carbon for the same purposes as nature uses it. He employs it as fuel, so does she, but he in the crude

form of coal, from which, also, he produces, for other purposes, different useful products artistically applicable as colouring substances, in which art, as he may one day find out, he is following some undiscovered natural design. Man uses the same elementary gases as nature does, with others that she does not employ with the same intention. Both use oxygen for sustaining combustion, but nature uses it systematically for construction, which man does not. Man uses hydrogen for combustion as nature does, but not for construction. Man takes advantage of nitrogen for concentration of energy; nature takes the same advantage, by which nitrogen, though negative, becomes the most important of vital structures; but she does more, she makes nitrogen constructive as well as concentrative, an art man has not attained.

In the applications of the compound substances in which two or more elements are in combination to produce what appears, to the unscientific, a single and simple substance, nature and man are in close alliance. When we came to converse on this point, fact upon fact accumulated, so that we had endless material for comparison. The use and application of water was of itself a rich and varied theme. Nature is always working with water, so often that we could not imagine the hand of nature in anything so much as in bringing water into construction, motion, work. She distils water from the earth, carries it, as vapour, to great heights, condenses it into clouds, which become electrical and explode with formation of drops and rain. She condenses it on mountains and lets it flow back as streams, rivulets, rivers, by which she makes it a motor power, and, indeed, in so far as our existences are concerned, a perpetual motion. She uses it for causing variations of temperature and for securing equalisations of temperature. She turns it to account in forming soluble and plastic structures. She constructs by it and from it temporary structures that are required to be in motion; and by its means she resolves such structures back to their elementary forms. She resolves by it many solid bodies so as to carry them where they would not otherwise find entrance, and she deposits these in their place where they make structure in specific form.

One of us ventured to assume that the purification of the atmosphere might possibly be brought about by the diffusion and electrification of water, so that if water were removed absolutely from the air, there would be accumulation of organical poisonous matter to such a degree that human and other animal life would soon be extinguished by pestilential disease. We agreed as to

these and other applications of water by nature ; but we also could not resist the conclusion that man, as a mechanic, has learned to use water in as many and as skilful methods. We traced him using it as a solvent, as a cleanser or purifier, as a destroyer. We traced him utilising it for a number of motor purposes. We dwelt on its application in the form of vapour in expansion and condensation so as to lead to alternate mechanical movements of solid bodies ; and thus we were easily led to the comparison of some natural and human machines, and specially to two : an animal body, the work of nature, and a locomotive, the work of man.

Inasmuch as we did not presume to pursue our study otherwise than in regard to bare mechanical inventive conception, with the admission that everything relating to first causes and powers was out of our range, we had no difficulty in comparing the mechanical work of nature and man, in the remarkable and yet limited plan of construction of an engine, possessing in one case fully completed, and in the other partly completed, vital endowments ; the one a moving being, able to govern its own mechanism ; the other a moving thing, capable only of movement when directed into movement and guided in movement by its superior master and manufacturer, man. 'Because a man makes an engine,' said one of us, 'he can govern it ; it is nothing more and nothing less than an extension of himself ; therefore it is inferior to him.' But that was not the question. The question was, As an engine is it inferior ? Suppose we were able to reduce the human body to a mere engine. Suppose a body that could not see, could not feel, could not hear, taste, smell ; suppose that no impression from the outer world could enter a body, or link itself with it. Suppose the muscular system were a simple condenser of energy, a storehouse of energy, which could be set to work, but not until it were started, fed, and directed by another body outside it possessing the necessary intelligence to feed it, start it into motion, and direct it—what then ? What if there could exist a properly constructed body according to natural construction, with this one difference, that the nervous system were replaced simply by a storage battery, which, for brief intervals after being refreshed, and for long intervals if regularly refreshed, would go on working and, in that sense, living ; what then would be the comparison between an animal so formed, or so misformed, and, say, a steam-engine of the best make, the best that the most accomplished mechanics could at their best turn out ? In such a case an animal would stand in true rivalry with an engine for comparison. Doubtless nature, in formal and new

competition with man, could speedily put him to shame ; could produce mightier engines than he, for does she not in the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the whale, of our own age, produce something like rival engines of power ; and did she not, in previous epochs, produce much mightier engines still, in which there was nearer approach to the engine than in either the whale, the elephant, or the rhinoceros ? This was fair speculation, but as things are, on comparing human mechanism of best type with the mechanism of nature, putting intelligence for the moment aside, need man be ashamed of his mechanical inventive skill or of the comparative accuracy of his work ?

We recalled here what Dumas, the illustrious French chemist, had said, in speaking of the application of the matter supplied from the magazine from which the world derives its energy, the ancient deposits of coal, and his comment on that substance which, 'burned by the genius of Papin and Watt, has produced carbonic acid, water, heat, motion, one would almost say life and intelligence.' We did not admit the 'almost' because a wide gulf separates the pure mechanism of nature from the realms of life and intelligence. We thought alone of a mechanism that could be inspired with motion apart from intelligence, and then we were able to strike the comparison between the natural and the human engine. We recalled one of the late Neil Arnott's summaries of such comparison. How the animal body, in life, takes food, animal or vegetable ; and the engine, in action, takes also food or fuel as coal and wood, both being combustible ; how the animal body takes drink, essentially water, and the engine, in action, takes drink, also water ; how the animal body takes in breath, common air, and the engine takes in breath, also common air ; how the animal produces, by slow combustion, a steady animal heat of a little above ninety-eight degrees Fahr., and the engine produces a steady boiling heat of two hundred and twelve degrees ; how the animal machine produces foul breath or air loaded with carbonic acid and water-vapour from the windpipe, and the engine produces smoke from the chimney, air loaded with carbonic acid and water-vapour ; how the animal machine produces animal refuse, part of the food which does not burn, and the engine produces ashes, part of the fuel which does not burn ; how the animal machine produces motion by simple alternate contraction and relaxation of the muscles, which, acting through the levers, joints, and tendons of the limbs, does work of endless variety, and the engine produces motion by simple alternate push and pull of the pistons, which, acting through

levers, joints, and bands, does work of endless variety ; lastly, how in the animal machine a deficiency of food, drink, or air first disturbs and then stops the motion of life, and in the engine a deficiency of fuel, water, or air first disturbs the action of the engine and then stops it.

We gathered in these comparisons some idea of the close approach which man, as a mechanic, has made towards pure animal mechanism, and when we began to consider his perfect mechanical details, the working of the pistons, the levers, the joints, and the regulators, we could come to no other conclusion than that the workmanship for the end intended was equal to anything in the animal machine. In principle of action, in relation to the amount of work to be obtained from the same amounts of food, the skill, so far, was seen to be largely on the side of nature and, therefore, more economical, for man has not yet the plan at his finger ends of getting work out of slow combustion and of obtaining all the work that ought to be obtained out of the fuel he consumes in his engine. He works at extra cost as compared with his rival ; but, putting this aside, he stands fair in rivalry. His mechanism is true to the letter and in the best form, and when he has learned the art correctly, he can govern his artificial mechanism with as equal ease and exactitude as he can the actions of his own animal mechanism. And see, it was observed, how much longer his machine lasts in good and healthy work. ‘I know,’ said one of us, ‘an engine that lived out four of the engineers who had charge of it day by day, and yet they may all have been considered as men living out the fair term of a working man’s life.’ Perhaps this was not a fair argument ; perhaps it might have been suggested that not one of these four men took a tithe of the pains to keep his own animal body in the same order and cleanliness for maintenance of health as he devoted to the engine under his charge ; perchance it would be just, also, to remember that the mental or intelligent part of the living and intelligent being is doing work which wears, and that when it rests in sleep there is much unconscious labour in progress. Still, it is a fine proof of the marvellous skill of the human mechanic that he can produce a mechanism that shall present such a startling rivalry of endurance of action against his vastly superior competitor.

The most surprising part of our survey of these two kinds of mechanical labours—the one by nature the other by man—still remained. In looking at the steps by which man had moved towards the accomplishment of his mechanical skill, we

could find in his method no intentional imitation. In the construction of his engine, bearing such subtle approach to an animal and living body, man appeared before us working entirely on his own lines. He began by observing the simplest fact, the power of a jet of steam to turn a fan wheel, and he proceeded therefrom to make what was nothing more nor less than a toy. It was as simple an experiment as rubbing a piece of amber and making it in its excited state attract certain light particles. And so the first step once taken remained without advance for ages. Then came the new experiment of utilising the expansive power of steam to perform work; next the experiment of condensation of the expanded fluid; in due course the application of these two discoveries to the motions produced by the push and the pull; and, finally, the engine with fuel-food, water-drink, breath, heat, new chemical products, excreta, manageable action, a working life, and decay; approaches all towards veritable life, produced from the beginning to the end by human independent skill, observation, and labour; not one important detail borrowed from nature or her plans. The plans were often, it is true, her own. The lighting of the fire, the feeding with fuel and water; these and other processes were similar to natural plans, but not by any idea of imitation, nor from any idea that the animal mechanism was worked on the same lines. On the contrary, the possibilities were that, if man had proceeded to construct a working engine on the principles of an animal body as a working engine, he would have lost himself altogether, and would never have reached the result he aimed to attain. For our parts not one of us could recall any inventor or discoverer, engaged in working out the engine, who seized so much as a hint leading to those ultimate results of comparison which Dr. Arnott has so clearly described. One of us referred to the great chemist and physicist, Joseph Black, the author of the theory of latent heat and practical demonstrator of the fact that the products of animal combustion and of ordinary combustion are the same; but when we turned to his works we could not find a line which would lead to the support of the hypothesis that he entertained an idea of any sort bearing on the analogy of artificial or human mechanism with natural design. He was the teacher of Watt, and Watt, without doubt, was assisted by him; but not out of the ordinary course of mechanical experiment, not by any references to animal mechanisms as object lessons leading to the discovery of a working engine.

It happened that at the time when this altogether unpremedi-

tated symposium was being held, the science of photography was in its infancy. Daguerre had had his day, a brilliant day too, and now his process was being fast superseded by another and a better. One of the investigators, who had added largely to the new method, was at our table, taking, all through, an active part in our discourse. His presence led, as might well be expected, to a discussion on the invention of the camera. Here, at all events, was one instrument which must have been borrowed from nature, for was it not simply an eyeball? There were the parts in proper order, in the same order, as in the eyeball. There were the walls, the lenses, the absorbing black surfaces, the screen for the reception of the picture, and the prepared surface of the screen for retaining the picture. If these comparisons were all coincidences it were strange indeed. We had to take the speculation of the camera as an instrument of imitation to pieces. The lenses of the eyeball are portions of transparent matter, which we call colloidal matter. The lenses of the camera are of glass, and glass may also be designated colloidal matter. But had the invention of glass anything to do with the lenses existent in the eyeball? Improbable, nay, impossible. The mode of making glass could never have been found out by any examination of the lenses of the eyeball, even had men at the time when glass was the discovery of their age known about the lenses. Glass would be originally an accidental discovery, a substance taken out of the furnace in which some earth had been burned, earth like that which in old Egypt was called 'glass earth,' and which, through the Alexandrian school, so we thought, was brought into various shapes and casts for use by man. The cast into a globe or lens would follow, and when that was accomplished the fact that the globe condensed light would be a necessary observation, one that men could not avoid discovering and turning to a practical purpose. That part of the camera called the lens would not, therefore, come from an imitation of the natural lens in the eyeball. But, the lens being once made, might not the anatomy of the eyeball suggest the insertion of an artificial lens into a case or box, and the introduction into the back of the case of a screen? We divided pretty equally on this subject. Some of us thought the imitation too apparent to be doubted, but others held that there was no proof of anything of the kind. For man to have imitated from nature in this matter there must have been a good school of anatomy. The eyeball must have been well dissected and its parts clearly defined. The effect of the lenses in pro-

ducing an image on the retina must have been proved by experiment, and the coats of the eyeball must have been demonstrated. The picture on the retina could never have been known until someone had removed the sclerotic and choroid coats of the ball at the back and had looked at the inverted picture on the retina from behind, an experiment far away from probability, an experiment that would not have been suggested from any mere dissection of the eye, until optical discoveries had been carried on up to the point of suggestion. Much more likely was it that, from experiments made with artificial glass lenses of purely human invention, the function of the eyeball as a camera was inferred from the adjustment of such lenses in a case than that the eyeball was the model, and originating model, of the camera. Besides, some argued that when the camera was discovered, assuming the instrument were in use in the time of Roger Bacon, what proof was there that anatomy was so far advanced as to afford the required demonstration? Lastly, it was contended that when once the lens was discovered there was no necessity for any imitation. The lens produced everything optical; it produced the telescope, the microscope, and the camera. Give to the men of science of to-day a lens of glass, and let it be seen what it can do in respect to light, and though an eyeball had never been dissected, the instruments named above would certainly in course of time be invented. We did not disagree on this point, though some of us still maintained the possibility of imitation.

We reached a new and good subject for debate on taking up the study of a much more simple mechanical contrivance, achieved by the rival mechanics, nature and man. We studied a valve. Here the rivalry stands out in the most striking form. Nature constructs valves. Her best kinds of this contrivance she places in the animal body. She plans them so distinctively, it is hard and, in truth, all but impossible to imagine here the theory of evolution. It is as though a model had first been made, tried, adopted, and perfected. The valve varies according to its requirements. In two places it is a compound valve made up of three segments which have to be adapted to work within a circular tube. There is a mechanical difficulty in making these meet in the centre in such a manner as to ensure perfect closure. Let any one who wishes to test the difficulty try the experiment with three pieces of softened parchment. Nature meets it by inserting three minute beads, one in the centre of each segment, and the success is so beautifully complete, design stares one in

the face. Beneath these valves, which are situated at the outlets of the heart of the highest animal, she has two other sets of valves, each segment of which is suspended from a ring and falls into a cavity, that has to expand to receive a charge of fluid—blood, and then contract to expel that fluid onwards. These last-named valves, when the cavities in which they are placed relax and receive blood, hang in a vertical position; but as the cavities expand and the fluid enters them, the segments of the valves float upon that fluid to the upper surface of it and cover it; further they cannot go, because they are corded down by proper lengths of cords to the walls of their cavity underneath. By the time they are evenly floated and made just taut, it is time for the cavity to contract, and then they are brought into full tension, so that, their free edges meeting with nicety, they form a complete barrier to the return of blood into the space above them, an arrangement which again looks precisely like design, the result of mechanical skill, acquired from experience or experimental knowledge.

These different kinds of valves were adduced as beyond all known human skill; but the argument was not sustained. We began to recall human mechanical contrivances which stood out independently, and which were in principle and in detail quite as correct and quite as efficient. The valve of the force-pump, of the air-pump, and of many other instruments, came to our minds, and one of us explained the action of the elastic or rubber valve, which has the same mitre-like shape as the mitral valve of the heart itself, the design of an ordinary workman and purely and simply human in all its invention. In the end we were forced to the conclusion that, admirable as the valves of the heart were, they could be equalled by some which have come from human skill, and that certain valves in other parts of an animal machine, valves consisting of folds of membrane, could not be considered, from the point of view of fine workmanship, as perfect either in action or efficiency.

From valves we passed to joints, from joints to columns, from columns to levers, and from levers to cavities, coverings, and other protective contrivances. The comparisons were not unfavourable to man as the rival of nature, and we did not feel it profane to admit that, in many such mechanical arrangements, he had exceeded, not what nature might have done, but what she had done and had put before us as her work. I remember, too, that there were many other details of mechanical order in which we compared

natural with human skill in the arch, the screw, and the elastic structures; but the view we arrived at was in each case the same, namely, that man, when considered simply as a mechanical labourer, was as inventive as his rival, nature, often as neat, and sometimes, in details, as perfect.

We came also to the conclusion that in some respects man possesses advantages: he goes to the same market as nature for his materials; but, whilst nature only produces at points where the materials she wants are at hand, man often fetches his materials from a distance, makes a careful selection from a large assortment of materials, finds facility of choosing conditions favourable to the working of his mechanisms, which nature does not, and, indeed, not infrequently prepares and sets things in order for nature herself and her works, as when in a garden he lays out the plans by which the growth and ripening of fruits and plants are rendered easy processes, but which would be difficult or impossible if he had not intervened in order to give the proper soil, moisture, warmth, air, light, and, it may be, physical support. On the other hand, there are certain advantages in the work of nature which we felt surpassed those of man. The works of both wear out, but not in the same way. Nature, in her solid work, produces structures which, for a long time, undergo steady repair in a spontaneous manner. She reproduces as she destroys. In animals the organs that are built up out of food are kept in regular course of dissolution and repair, the supply keeping pace with the waste, in order that one part may be many times reconstructed. In the machines made by man the destruction that occurs takes no such repair. It may admit of being mended, but it cannot be reconstructed as it wears, and, if it must compete with nature against time, it must be made from the first with such skill that it will not wear out, and it must be kept in such perfect cleanliness and order that it will suffer the least possible from friction and oxidation; and, as we have seen, this is sometimes so far effected that one engine will wear or work through generations of men; starting, so to say, with a sounder constitution and lasting longer if it be properly cared for. Which, therefore, is the best, we asked—the construction of a mechanism perfected from the first to last through a lengthened period, or of one that lasts by being constantly re-made and recruited? We agreed that for the sake of the variety that ever exists in natural efforts the persistent reconstructive plan was best, because it allowed of the progressive advancement called evolution.

We wandered from these points to another. A distinguished poet was adduced who had noticed with great admiration some of the works that are being carried out by animals inferior to man. The poet had signalised the bird's nest. He had described, in perfect language, the mode of construction, and had asked what man, 'with all appliances of art to boot, could make him such another.' We admired the skill of the poet as he admired the skill of the nest-maker, but we were not able to follow him in his application or moral. He was presenting an animal of a lower kind than man as superior to man, as being a natural power equal with nature; or, as nature herself distinct from man. We said, on our parts, that in this constructive skill the bird was exercising the same constructive skill as man in an inferior degree, and nothing more. We were bold enough to hold that thousands of men and women could, with a little practice, construct a nest as cleverly as any bird living, and could soon, if necessary, add to the beauty, the convenience, and the comfort of the structure. We were induced to recall analogies of a similar character. A member of our little group, now, alas, long since dead, but whose career as a naturalist at that time promised to be of the brightest, had a short period before been studying the habits of the beaver in its native haunts. He corrected many of the fallacious statements that have been made about the architectural skill of this animal. He explained to us the dams of stone, wood, and mud it lays across the narrowest parts of a water-course so as to confine the water, the dam being sometimes six feet in height, and so planned, if necessary, as to enable wood to be floated to the hut or house which it also built. He told us how it felled trees by gnawing through the trunks in such a manner that when a tree fell it would fall into the water. He described how the animal would cut the wood into lengths, and drag or roll the lengths to the dam, or float them along canals it had formed leading to the dam. He gave a description of the kind of houses it built; a dwelling, it may be, of twenty feet in diameter at the base and six feet high, formed of poles and mud, and covered in above like a heap of meadow turf. He explained that, in the first instance, the house is built small, and is enlarged by building over it new layers and gnawing away the wood from the inside. He told us that there were no such things as windows or ventilating shafts, except through the floor into the water, for entrance and escape; he assured us that the story of the beaver laying on the mud with its tail, as if the tail were a trowel, was a myth, but

that it had a clever plan of rafting the supply of winter wood, which yields the store of food, in such a way as to keep it safely under water, tucking the ends under the roots of trees, and interlacing one rod into another. He related the plan adopted for securing the little beaver community from inundation, by means of overflow canals; and, after recording that, when in a house the family exceeded a round dozen, it broke up by a pair going forth and building a new house and home of their own, he bemoaned the fate of the 'bachelor beavers,' the old males, who, having either lost their mates or been expelled for bad conduct, were forced to live alone, not in warm houses protected by dams, but in holes in the banks of the river where they could store their winter food. Yet, added our friend when he had concluded his short narrative, the chief fact of all is that, notwithstanding the whole of the skill named, there is no advancement because there is no new acquirement. These mechanical creatures learn nothing. A pair of them taken from their parents immediately after they have come into conscious existence, though never allowed to see a beaver hut or a dam, nor a method of making a canal, nor a system of storing up winter food, would go and do the whole of these things for themselves if they were placed in a position that allowed them free scope for carrying out these processes; but no more. Theirs, in short, is the continuance of the constructive spirit that exists in pure nature. The same exists in man in his primitive stage with power of advancement; so that man lies, apparently, not only above the lower craftsman, but above nature, unless she be imperceptibly making advancements which our wisest men, even through lapse of ages, neither see in details nor recognise in results.

I believe we pursued this topic of inferior animal skill still further by speaking of the skill of ants, and finally we were brought to discuss the slow skill of man in his rude days of primitive life. I know we wondered what a human being who had been left alone in the world, and had never seen any kind of construction that would protect him from wind and storm, would do, by what some would call his instincts; whether he would begin to construct and restart a new civilisation? We came to the conclusion that he would, and we came also to the conclusion that he *must*, because there is in him the same constructive energy that there is in nature. Man is born to construct. He differs from other animals in seeing plans of constructions which are beyond his own imitation, and at the same time he constructs

things which are not seen by him in nature and still are in the order and designing of nature. In other words, there is in man, as in the bird and the beaver, as strong an impulse to act in construction as there is to walk and to speak. That the impulse to action in these respects is rudimentary at first, and does not become remarkable until after slow and gradual development, has nothing to do with the fact of the original impulsion; and if man has passed through gradational stages from lowest to highest forms of life, there must still have been in him a primary impulse towards construction by which he has acquired the power to do that which he has not seen done, and to become in his best state of intellectual development the rival of nature herself in certain of her finest works, and the utiliser of some of her own products which she has passed over in her choicest designs.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

I close the note of this symposium to add another note of a practical kind. It may occur to some readers that a discussion on the subject of nature and man as rival mechanics is of no practical value; one of those wild and dreamy kind of subjects which suffice to fill the idle hours of idle students, and no more. I do not think this a fair view. The subject is more than curious. Curious it is in the profoundest degree, for it suggests questions which, from the time of Aristotle himself, have been uppermost in the minds of thinking men. Why should ever a man—and it may be an uneducated man—invent from his own impulse? Why should he make the simplest of simplest new thing, having in his own range no possible object from which to copy the thing he has made? And why afterwards should it be open to discovery that the same invention was, after all, concealed somewhere in nature—work of her pure skill? In all his works is man invariably subordinate to nature, and do his, apparently original, powers rest entirely on the mere multiplication or accretion of them? Why, if two men are working together at the same work, can one man see and do what the other cannot and would not be expected to see or to do? What is the gift that makes a wrangler, and why does the competition for perfection in mathematics go by degrees? Is the mind that conceived the whole earth and invented primitively every principle and virtually every thing the same mind as the mind which moves the inventor in the human form we call man?

This is the curious side of the subject; the practical is less attractive but more immediate. We notice daily that capacity for invention of mechanical things, when permitted full scope for its development, is one of the most powerful of all human incentives to action, and what I want to enforce is that we ought to give that capacity the fullest and freest development in our schools and colleges. We have been led to suppose that a boy who is glad to leave his books in order to indulge in some mechanical art, such as making and flying a kite, or building a rabbit-hutch, or putting together a toy engine, or other act of a similar kind, is an idle boy. We have been induced under this impression to limit his enjoyments in these mechanical directions; to point out to him that he is not going to get his living by mechanical work, or other common occupation, but that he has to prepare himself for professional or statesman's labours, and that he must read and learn. We do our best to kill the divinest part of the mind of that young mind. His mind was inventive, and we check the spirit of invention; we arbitrarily force it by our mistaken interference into what it was not born to be. We put the youth to some routine pursuit which occupies part of his time, and we leave his active impulses unsatisfied. Now and then, in spite of correcting and training, he will break through our bonds. He will become a dwarfed and so-called amateur mechanic, or, in rarest instances, where the inventive skill is so strong as to master every controlling influence, he may become a master in inventive skill, and rise to exceptional fame. But, unfortunately, by the conquest of original and natural tastes of an inventive character, we train too often, not out of invention, for that is impossible, but into inventions of various kinds that are both false and mischievous to human welfare. The inventive skill breaks out in pernicious mechanical arts. Gambling is a pernicious mechanical art. In its ablest development it carries with it the shrewdest, the finest inventive power, sustained, in many instances, by an enthusiasm and perseverance which leads to death from severe nervous application and exhaustion. The gambler is like nature in earthquake. He is not necessarily a bad man, but he is a perverted man. The skill of his hands in its ordinary manifestations is mechanical skill which he expects to see rewarded, with as keen an anxiety as a better and purer mechanical genius would expect to behold, in the action of some ingenious machine he has invented and put together. To compare great things with small, the book which the professed and able gambler makes up,

in such a manner that out of it something must come to him, is a product of inventive skill of the most laborious, and, in its way, accomplished cast. More than once a man of this mechanical turn of mind has been under my professional observation for those nervous perturbations of the heart and brain, to which professors of his class are subject, and from which they ordinarily succumb in comparatively early life. In examples of this kind we may sometimes discover a mechanical taste amounting to mechanical genius. 'I was removed from school,' one of these reported to me, 'because books were a daily cross. I could construct anything, maps, plans, toys, of a mechanical kind, and had I been put to mathematics I am sure I should have shone. But my master declared me fitted only for a carpenter, mason, or other handicraft, and my good but misled parents, greatly shocked at having a son so incompetent, put me to the desk in a banking establishment. They could not have done a worse thing. I soon mastered the mere methodical labour, and could cast up a column of figures more quickly than any of my fellow clerks; but, I hated the narrow sphere of action in which there was neither variety nor scope for enthusiasm, and soon my thoughts turned to a new pursuit. The proximity to money moved me to the mechanics of money and money changing. I began to speculate and then to bet. Betting men, I found, were adepts at calculation, and very rapidly my budding talents broke out in their direction of study. My natural gifts helped me on into what amongst such men is fame. Of course I left the bank, and now I can make up a book with any man in my line in any department where hazard plays the leading feature. In the majority of cases I can now beat hazard; and, in a long run, can always win. But the success is not worth having; the strain is incessant, and the result is both morally and pecuniarily contemptible, while the mode of life is murderous.' So it proved, and a great mechanical engineer fell, as a gambler, by the usual premature decline, into mental and physical death.

We may descend to a lower sphere for the same order of facts. In the lowest spheres of life the force of inventive faculty may be detected. The burglar himself as a mechanical genius may be a rival of nature. An honest genius of an inventive kind invents a lock; straightaway another inventive genius of a dishonest kind picks that lock. A man, not a burglar, but a professed lock-picker, picked a subtle lock of a bureau for me because I had lost the key. The science the man showed, the resource, the ingenuity, formed

a study, and his efforts were soon crowned with success. I was struck by the skill the man displayed, but still more by the philosophy. 'They call the man who invented that there lock, Sir, a gentleman, and they say he's made a tremendous fortune by it, but they gives no credit to them as has larned to pick it; not a bit of it! not they! and some of them as can pick it they calls burglars and gives 'em years of hard labour, tho' they was just as clever as the lucky un, who set the thing a-going.' It is true, and from such experiences there is a great deal for us all to learn. What I learn most is as follows: Nature and man are rival mechanics, but not every man in the same degree. All men and all women possess some mechanical skill, and a large minority are so finely endowed that the faculty of invention is forced to develop itself in them either for good or for evil. Further, the special faculty of endowment is not an acquired faculty; it seems to descend in man as it does in the bird and the beaver, but with special power for advancement in man. Why, then, in our educational methods, do we not make it a point to detect and cultivate this, much as we dislike the word, 'innate' faculty? Why should not education in mechanics form a necessary part of the national education, and take at least as prominent a part as the mere book work? And, why to the poorest scholar should not elementary mathematics, beyond arithmetic, be added to our school curriculum in every school in the land? Why should not the use of the rule, the square, and the compass rank amongst the chief standards of scholastic accomplishment, and the natural human rivalry with nature extend to rivalry in precision? There would be a good moral in such a rivalry as well as the cultivation of a constructive development that would transform into fine form artistic in every department of living action. To life, also, some new happiness of amusement would be added, since construction is pastime. The founder of the Andersonian College in Glasgow said that if anyone wanted to get together an interested crowd he had only to do one thing, set up a piece of moving mechanism and begin to explain it. It was a saying as true as it was wise, and it was both wise and true because man as the rival mechanic of nature is nothing unless he be mechanical.

B. W. RICHARDSON.

Harpford Wood.

'Sub tegmine fagi.'

NOW the bright noon lies heavy on the earth,
 Now the tired world has drooped her eyes in rest.
 The birds, all hushed their morning songs of mirth,
 Sit silent in the shade with ruffled breast.
 The far-off moor is wrapped in purple haze,
 No passing zephyr stirs the golden corn,
 That yellowing ever through hot autumn days
 Stands waiting, till on creaking wain upborne
 Its gathered sheaves are piled on some bright harvest morn.

But here the woodland ways are full of shade
 With cushions of deep moss and hanging ferns,
 And all the banks are trimmed with ivy-braid
 Starred with pale flowers, that never sunbeam burns.
 Huge branching beech-trunks tinged with silvery grey
 Uphold a canopy of whispering leaves ;
 And down the dell, drenching the ferns with spray,
 Leaps a swift stream, while round its edges cleaves
 Full many a flower whose scent fills all the summer eaves.

At such a time as this, perchance, there still
 Might come some leaf-crowned Dryad down the dell,
 Or shining Oread from the distant hill
 To lave her locks in yonder limpid well ;
 Or some bright-eyed Bacchante to refresh
 The drooping vine-leaves on her thyrsus bound,
 And twine anew the withered ivy-mesh
 With which the masses of her hair were crowned,
 And wonder at the hush in all the woods around.

Hark ! even now I seem to hear her cry,
‘ Where art thou, Bacchus, and thy merry train ?
Why is there nought but echo to reply
Whose lone voice answers mine when I complain ?
Where are the nymphs and fauns, once wont to meet
In shady glades and round the babbling streams ?
The sunlight shines through these green leaves as sweet
As in time past, but all this forest seems
Spell-bound, like some strange world seen in uneasy dreams.’

Ah no ! ’tis no Illyrian woodland here,
No human voice was that which sounded then,
’Twas but some cushat’s moan, low-toned and clear,
Among the tangled hollies down the glen.
These glades knew nought of Pan and all his crew,
Nor ever soundeth here Apollo’s lute,
But when the spring bedecks the trees anew,
Here throstles and the mellow black-bird’s flute,
And never all day long the chiffchaff’s voice is mute.

But now the sun is sinking to his rest,
And long dark shadows lie along the sward.
A flush of golden glory fills the West,
Bright as some Eastern monarch’s treasure-hoard.
Farewell ! ye darkening glades of dreaming trees,
Where all the busy world is out of sight,
Where no sound startles save the summer breeze
That stirs the topmost leaves with touches light—
Farewell ! I leave you now to silence and the night.

S. CORNISH WATKINS.

*The Three Fates.*¹

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD, AUTHOR OF 'MR. ISAACS,'
'DR. CLAUDIUS,' &c.

CHAPTER XV.

TOTTY had lost no time in spreading the report that everything was broken off between George Wood and Constance Fearing, and she had done it so skilfully that no one would have thought of tracing the story to her, even if it had proved to be false. She had cared very little what George himself thought about it, though she had not failed to see that he would lay the blame of the gossip on the Fearings. The two girls, indeed, could have no object in circulating a piece of news which did not reflect much credit upon themselves. What Totty wanted was in the first place that George should know that she was acquainted with his position, in order that she might play the part of the comforter and earn his gratitude. She could not, of course, question him directly, and she was therefore obliged to appear as having heard the tale from others; to manage this with success it was necessary that the circumstances of the case should be made common property. Secondly, and here Totty's diplomatic instinct showed itself at its strongest, she was determined to prevent all possibility of a renewal of relations between Constance and George. In due time, probably in twenty-four hours at the latest, both Constance and Grace would know that all society was in possession of their secret. Having, of course, not mentioned it themselves to any one, they would feel sure that George had betrayed them in his anger, and would be proportionately incensed against him. If both parties should be so angry as to come to an explanation, which was improbable, neither would believe the

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other, the quarrel would grow and the breach would be widened. Totty herself would, of course, take George's part, as would the majority of his acquaintance, and he would be grateful for such friendly support at so trying a time.

Matters turned out very nearly as Mrs. Sherrington Trimm had anticipated. There was, indeed, a slight variation in the programme, but she was not aware of it at the time, and if she had noticed it she would not have attached to it the importance it deserved. It chanced that Constance and Grace Fearing and George Wood had been asked with certain other guests to dine with a certain young couple lately returned from their wedding tour in Europe. The invitations had been sent and accepted on the last day of April, that is to say on the day preceding the one on which Constance gave George her definite refusal, and the dinner was to take place three or four days later. Now, the young couple, who had bought a small place on the Hudson River, and were anxious to move into it as soon as possible, took advantage of those three or four days to go up to their country-house and to arrange it for themselves according to their ideas of comfort. They returned to town on the morning of their party, and were of course ignorant of the gossip which had gone the rounds in their absence. Late in the afternoon of the day the husband came home from his club in great distress to tell his wife that Constance Fearing had thrown over George Wood, and that the two were not on speaking terms. It was too late to make any excuse to their guests, so as to divide the party and give two separate dinners on different days. The worst of it was, that their table was small, the guests had been carefully arranged, and George Wood must inevitably sit beside either Constance or Grace. The young couple were in despair, and spent all the time that was left in trying vainly to redistribute the places. There was nothing to be done but to put George next to Grace and to affect a total ignorance of the difficulty. At the last moment, however, the young hostess thought she could improve matters by speaking a word to George when he arrived. Constance and her sister, however, came before him.

'I am so sorry,' said the lady of the house, quickly, in the ear of the elder girl, as she drew her a little aside. 'Mr. Wood is coming. We have been out of town and knew nothing about it. I do hope——'

'I am very glad he is to be here,' answered Constance. She was very pale and very calm.

'Oh dear!' exclaimed the hostess, growing very red. 'I hope I have said nothing——'

'Not at all,' said Constance, reassuring her. 'There is a foolish bit of gossip in the air, I believe. The facts are very simple. Mr. Wood is a very old and good friend of mine. He asked me to marry him, and I could not. I like him very much, and I hope we shall be as good friends as before. If there is any blame in the matter I wish to bear it. There he is.'

The hostess felt better after this, but her curiosity was excited, and as George entered the room she went forward to meet him.

'I am so sorry,' she said. 'The Fearings are here and you will have to sit next to the younger one. You see we have only just heard . . . I am so sorry.'

George Wood inclined his head a little. He was very quiet and grave.

'I may as well tell you at once,' he said, 'that there is not a word of truth in the story they are telling. I shall be very much obliged if you will deny it when you hear it mentioned. There never was any engagement between Miss Fearing and me.'

'Well, I am very glad to hear it. Pray, forgive me,' said the lady of the house.

George met Constance with his most impenetrably civil manner, and they exchanged a few words which neither of them understood while they were speaking them, nor remembered afterwards. They both spoke in a low voice, and the impression produced upon the many curious eyes that watched them was that they were on very good terms, though slightly embarrassed by the consciousness that they were being so much talked of.

At the dinner-table George found himself next to Grace. For some time he talked with his neighbour on his other side, then turned and inquired when Grace and her sister were going out of town, and what they intended to do during the summer. She, on her part, while answering his questions, looked at him with an air of cold and scornful surprise. Presently there was a brief burst of general conversation. Under cover of the numerous voices Grace asked a direct question.

'What do you mean by telling such a story as every one is repeating about my sister?' she asked.

George's eyes gleamed angrily for a moment and his answer came sharply and quickly.

'You would do better to ask that of yourself—or of Miss Fearing. I have said nothing.'

'I do not intend to discuss the matter,' Grace answered icily. 'If the story were true it would hurt us and we should not tell it. But it is a lie, and a malicious lie.' She turned her head away.

'Miss Fearing,' George said, bending towards her a little, 'I do not intend to be accused of such doings by any one. Do you understand? If you will take the trouble to ask the man on your left, he will tell you that I have denied the story everywhere during the last four days.'

Grace looked at him again, and there was a change in her face. She was about to say something in reply, when the general talk, which had allowed them to speak together unheard, was interrupted by an unexpected pause.

'Do you prefer Bar Harbour to Newport, Miss Fearing?' George inquired in a tone which led every one to suppose that they had been discussing the comparative merits of watering-places.

The young girl smiled as she made an indifferent answer. She liked the man's coolness and tact in such small things. He was ready, imperturbable and determined, possessing three of the qualities which women like best in man. A little later another chance of exchanging a few words presented itself. This time Grace spoke less abruptly and coldly.

'If you have said nothing, who has told the tale?' she asked.

'I do not know,' George answered, keeping his clear eyes fixed on hers. 'If I knew, I would tell you. It is a malicious lie, as you say, and it must have been set afloat by a malicious person—by some one who hates us all.'

'Some one who hates my sister and me. It cannot injure you in any way.'

'That is true,' said George. 'It had not struck me at first, because I was so angry at hearing the story. Does your sister imagine that I have had anything to do with it?'

'Yes,' Grace answered, and her lip curled a little. George misunderstood her expression and drew back rather proudly. The fact was that Grace was thinking how Constance accused herself every day of having been heartless and cruel, declaring in her self-abasement that even if George had chosen to tell the story he would have had something very like a right to do so. Grace had no patience with what she regarded as her sister's weakness.

To the delight of the young couple who gave the dinner it passed off very pleasantly. There had been no apparent coldness anywhere, and they were persuaded that none existed.

'Will you be kind enough to tell your sister what I have told you?' said George to his neighbour as they rose from the table.

'If you like,' she answered indifferently. 'Unless you prefer to tell her yourself.' The emphasis she put on the last part of the sentence showed plainly enough what her opinion was.

'I will,' he said.

A little later in the evening he sat down by Constance in a comparatively quiet corner of the small drawing-room.

'Will you allow me to say a few words to you?' he asked.

She looked at him in pathetic surprise, and if he had been a little more vain than he was, he would have seen that she was grateful to him for coming to her.

'I am always glad when you talk to me,' she said, and her voice trembled perceptibly.

'You are very good,' he answered in a tone that meant nothing. 'I would not trouble you if it did not seem necessary. I have been talking about the matter to your sister at dinner. I wish you to know that I have had nothing to do with the invention of the story that is going the rounds of the town. I have denied it to everyone, and I shall continue to deny it.'

Constance glanced timidly at him, and then sighed as though she were relieved of a burden.

'I am very glad you have told me,' she said.

'Do you believe me?' he asked.

'I have always believed everything you have told me, and I always shall. But if you had told some one what everybody is repeating, I should not have blamed you. It would have been almost true.'

'I do not say things which are only almost true,' said George very coldly.

Constance's face, which had regained some of its natural colour while she had been speaking with him, grew very white again, her lip trembled, and there were tears in her eyes.

'Are you always going to treat me like this?' she asked, pronouncing the words with difficulty, as though a sob were very near.

If George had said one kind word at that moment, his history and hers might have been very different from that day onwards. But the wound he had received was yet too fresh, and moreover he was angry with her for showing a tendency to cry, and he hardened his heart.

'I trust,' he answered in a chilly tone, 'that we shall always meet on the best of terms.'

A long silence followed, during which it was evident that Constance was struggling to maintain some appearance of outward calm. When she felt that she could command her strength, she rose and left him without another word. It was the only thing left for her to do. She could not allow herself to break down in a room full of people before every one, and she could not stay where she was without bursting into tears. She had humbled herself to the utmost, she had been ready to offer every atonement in her power, and he had met her with a face of stone and a voice that cut her like steel.

That was the last time he saw her before the summer season. She and her sister left town suddenly the next day, and George was left to his own devices and to the tender consolation that was showered upon him by Totty Trimm. But he was not easily consoled. As the days followed each other his face grew darker and his humour more gloomy. He could neither work nor read with any satisfaction, and he found even less pleasure in the society of men and women than in his own. He would not have married Constance now if she had offered herself to him and implored him to take her. If it had been possible, he would gladly have gone abroad for a few months, in the hope of forgetting what had happened to him amidst the varied discomforts, amusements, and interests of travelling. But he could not throw up certain engagements he had contracted, though at first it seemed impossible to fulfil them. He promised himself that as soon as he had accomplished his task he would start upon a journey without giving himself the trouble of defining its ultimate direction. For the present he remained sullenly in New York, sitting for hours at his table, a pen held idly between his fingers, his uneasy glance wandering from the paper before him to the wall opposite, from the wall to the window, from the window to his paper again. He was neither despondent nor hopeless. The more impossible he found it to begin his work, the more unyieldingly he forced himself to sit in his chair—the more doggedly he stuck to his determination. Writing had always seemed easy to him before, and he admitted no reason for its being hard now. With iron resolution he kept his place, revolving in his mind every situation and story of which he had ever heard and of which he believed he could make use. But though he turned, and twisted, and tormented every idea that presented itself, he could find neither plot

nor scene nor characters in the aching void of his brain. Hour after hour, day after day, he did his best, growing thinner and more tired every day, feeling each afternoon more exhausted by the fruitless contest he was sustaining against the apathy of his intelligence. But when the stated time for work was past, and he pushed back the sheet of paper, sometimes as white as when he had taken it in the morning, sometimes covered with incoherent notes that were utterly worthless; when he felt that he had done his duty and could not be held responsible for the miserable result; when his head ached, his brow was furrowed, and his sight had become uncertain—then, at last, he gave himself up to the contemplation of his own wretchedness and to the pain of his utter desolation.

Totty did her best to attract him to her house as often as possible. He was vaguely surprised that she should stay so long in town, but he troubled himself very little about her motives, and, as he never made any remark to her on the subject, she volunteered no explanation. She would have found it hard to invent one if she had been pressed to do so. It was hotter than usual at that season, and Mamie was greatly in need of a change. Tottie could not plead a desire to make economies as a plausible excuse with any chance of being believed, and even Tom Craik, whose health usually supplied her with reasons for doing anything she wanted to do, had betaken himself to Newport. She seemed to have lost her interest in his movements and doings of late, and had begun to express a pious belief that only Heaven itself could interfere successfully when a man took such rash liberties with his health. Mr. Craik, indeed, lived by the book of arithmetic as Tybalt fought—his food was weighed, his hours of sleep and half-hours of repose were counted and regulated by untiring attendants, the thickness of his clothing at each season was prescribed by a great authority, and his goings out and comings in were registered for the latter's inspection; carriage-makers invented vehicles for his use, upholsterers devised systems of springs and cushions for his rest, and, when he travelled, he performed his journeys in his own car. It was hard to see where Totty could have been of use to him, since he did not care for her conversation and could buy better advice than she could give.

If George had even suspected that Totty was responsible for the report spread concerning him and Constance, he would have renounced his cousin's acquaintance and would never have entered her house again, not even for the sake of his old friendship with

Sherry Trimm. But Totty's skill and tact had not been at fault. In her own opinion, she had made one failure in her life and one mistake. She had failed to induce her brother to change his will a second time, and she had committed a very grave error in opening the will itself in the strong room, instead of bringing it home with her and lifting the seal with a hot knife, so as to be able to restore it with all its original appearance of security. The question of the will still disturbed her, but she was not a cowardly woman, and, in particular, she was not afraid of her husband. If worst came to worst, she would throw herself upon his mercy, confess her curiosity, give him back the document, clear her conscience, and let him scold as he pleased. He would never tell any one, and Totty was not afraid of making great personal sacrifices when she could escape from a situation in no other way. At the present time the main thing of importance was to please George, and to induce him to make her house his own as much as possible. If Sherrington, knowing George's financial position, came back and found him engaged to marry Mamie, it would not be human in him to bear malice against his wife for the part she had played. Remorse she had none. She only regretted that she should have so far forgotten her caution as to do clumsily what she had done. She would neither fail nor make mistakes again.

She knew what she meant to do, and she knew how to do it. A man in George's situation is not easily affected by words, no matter how skilfully put together nor how kindly uttered. He either does not hear them at all, or pays no attention to them, or puts no faith in them. It is more easy to soothe his humour by giving him agreeable surroundings than by talking to him. He has no appetite, but he may be tempted by new and exquisite dishes. He wants stimulants, and an especial brand of very dry champagne flatters his palate, exhilarates his nervous system and produces no evil consequences. He smokes more than is good for him, and in that case it is better that he should smoke the most delicate cigars imported directly from Havana, than that he should saturate his brain with nicotine from a vulgar pipe—Totty thought all pipes vulgar. The love-lorn wretch is uneasy, but he is less restless when he is left to himself for half an hour after dinner, in an absolutely perfect easy-chair, with an absolutely perfect light, and with all the newest and greatest reviews of the world at his elbow. He loathes the thought of conversational effort, but he can listen with a lazy satisfaction to the social chatter of a clever mother and her beautiful daughter, or his sensitive ears may even

bear the reading aloud of the last really good novel. It is distressing to learn the next day that he does not remember the name of the hero nor the colour of the heroine's hair, and that he does not care to hear any more of the book. But it is no matter. Feminine invention is not at an end. It is late in May and there is a full moon. Would he enjoy a drive in the Park? He may smoke in the open carriage, if he pleases, for both the ladies like it. Or it will be Sunday to-morrow, and he never works on Sunday. Would it be very wrong to run out for the day on board of Mr. Craik's yacht, instead of going to church? Totty has the use of the yacht whenever she likes, and she can take her prayer-book on board and read the service with Mamie while George lies on deck and meditates. It is a steam-yacht, and it is no matter whether the weather is calm or not. If he likes they can go up the river with her instead. Or would he not care to have a horse waiting for him at seven in the morning at the corner of the Park? There are all those horses eating their heads off. It would be too early for Mamie to ride with him, unless he positively insists upon it; but it could not interfere with his day's work. He has forgotten to write a letter? Poor fellow, when he has been working all day long. It is a very important letter, and must be posted to-night. There is the luxurious writing-table with its perfect appliances, its shaded candles, the beautiful 'Charta Perfecta,' the smoothly-flowing ink that is changed every morning, the very pens he always uses, the spotless blotting-paper, wax and seals, if he needs them, and postage-stamps ready and separated from each other in the silver box—there is even a tiny sponge set in a little stand on which to moisten them, lest the coarse taste of the Government gum should offend the flavour of the Turkish coffee he has been drinking. He has an idea? He would like to make notes? There is the library beyond that door. It is lighted. He has only to shut himself in as long as he pleases. There is a box of those cigars on the table. He has forgotten his handkerchief? A touch of the bell, an order, and here are two of dear Sherrington's, silk or linen, whichever he prefers. The evening is hot? The windows are open and there is a mint-julep with a straw in it by his side. Or is it a little chilly? Everything is closed, the lamps are all lighted, and the subtle perfume of Imperial tea floats on the softened air. All is noiseless, perfect, soothing, beyond description, and yet so natural that he cannot feel as though it gave the least thought or trouble, nor as if it were all skilfully prepared for his especial benefit. He wonders

why Sherry Trimm ever goes to the club, when he could spend his evenings in such a home; he closes his eyes, thinks of his unwritten book, and asks himself whether the wheel of fortune will ever in its revolutions give him a right of his own to such supreme refinement of comfort.

It would have been strange indeed if George's humour had not been somewhat softened by so much luxury. He had liked what he could taste of it in his old days, when Totty had hardly ever asked him to dinner and had never expected to see him in the evening, in the days when he was a poor, unhappy nobody, and only a shabby relation of Mrs. Sherrington Trimm's. There had not been much done for his comfort then, when he came to the house; but the softness of the carpets, the elasticity of the easy-chairs, and the harmony of all details had seemed delightful to him, and Totty had always been kind and good-natured. But he had seen many things in the last two years, and was by no means so ready to be pleased as he had been when his only evening coat had been in a chronic state of repair. He had eaten terrapin and canvas-back off old Saxon china, and he had looked upon the champagne when it was of the most expensive quality. He had dined in grandeur with men whose millions were legion, and he had supped with epicures who knew what they got for their money. He had seen all sorts of society in his native city, all sorts of vulgar display, all sorts of unostentatious but enormously expensive luxury, all sorts of gilded splendour, and all sorts of faultless refinements in taste. But now, after he had dined and spent the evening with Totty half a dozen times in the course of a fortnight, he was ready to admit that he had never been in an establishment so perfect at all points, so quietly managed, so absolutely comfortable, and so unpretentiously sybaritic in all its details. Totty and her husband were undoubtedly rich, but they were no richer than hundreds of people he knew. It was not money alone that produced the results he saw, and the certainty that the household was managed upon a sort of artistic principle of enjoyment gave him intense satisfaction. There was the same difference between Totty's ways of living and that of most of her friends, that there is between a piece of work done by hand and the stereotyped copy of it made by machinery, the same difference there is between an illuminated manuscript and its illuminated fac-simile. The one is full of the individuality of the great artist, the other presents the perfection of execution without inspiration. The one charms, the other only pleases.

George appreciated most thoroughly at the end of the first week everything he ate, drank, felt and saw at his cousin's house, and what he heard was by no means as wearisome to his intelligence as he had supposed that it must be. Totty was far too clever a woman to flatter him openly, for she was keen enough to perceive that he was one of those men who feel a sort of repulsion for the work they have done, and who put little faith in the judgment of others concerning it. She soon found out that he did not care to see his books lying upon the drawing-room table, and that he suspected her of leaving them there with the deliberate intention of flattering him. They disappeared into the shelves of the library and were seen no more. But when George was reading the papers or a review—a form of rudeness in which she constantly encouraged him—she occasionally took the opportunity of introducing into her quiet conversation with Mamie some expression or some thought which he had used or developed in his writings. She avoided quotation, which she had always considered vulgar, and exercised her ingenuity in letting his favourite ideas fall from her lips in a perfectly natural manner. Though he was not supposed to be listening, he often heard her remarks, and was unconsciously pleased. The subtlety of the flatterer could go no further. Nor was that part of the talk which concerned himself neither directly nor indirectly by any means tiresome. Totty possessed very good powers of conversation, and could talk very much better than most women when she pleased. If she pretended to abhor the name of 'culture' and generally affected an air of indifference to everything that did not affect her neighbours or herself, she did so with a wise premeditation and an excellent judgment of her hearers' capacities. But her own husband was fond of more intelligent subjects, and was a man of varied experience and wide reading, who liked to talk of what he read and saw. Totty's memory was excellent, and as she gave herself almost as much trouble to please Sherrington as she was now taking to please George, she had acquired the art of amusing her husband without any apparent exertion. What she said was never very profound, unless she had got it by heart; but the matter of it was generally clear, and very fairly well expressed.

As for Mamie, she was perfectly happy, for she was unconsciously very much in love with George, and to see him so often and in such intimacy was inexpressibly delightful. It was a pleasure even to see him sitting silent in his chair, it was happiness to hear him speak, and it was positive joy to wait upon him.

She had been more disturbed than she had been aware by his evident devotion to Constance Fearing during the winter. The gossip about the broken engagement had given her the keenest pain, due to the fact, as she supposed, that Constance was totally unworthy of the man she had jilted. But George's own assurance that no engagement had ever existed had driven the clouds from her sky, although his own subsequent conduct might well have aroused her suspicions. Totty, however, took good care to explain to her that the talk had been entirely without foundation and that George's silence and gloomy ways were the result of overwork. She hoped, she said, to induce him to spend the summer with them, and to give himself a long rest.

CHAPTER XVI.

'DEAR George,' said Totty, one evening near the end of May, 'I hate the idea of going away and leaving you here in the heat!'

'So do I,' answered George, thoughtfully, as he turned in his chair and looked at his cousin's face.

'I am sure you will fall ill. There will be nobody to take care of you, no place where you can drop in to dinner when you feel inclined, and where you can do just as you like. And yet—you see how Mamie is looking! I cannot conscientiously keep her here any longer.'

'Good heavens, Totty, you must not think of it! You do not mean to say you have been waiting here only on my account?'

Totty Trimm hesitated, withdrew one tiny foot, of which the point had projected beyond the skirt of her tea-gown, and then put out the other and looked at it curiously. They were both so small and pointed that George could not have told which was the right and which the left. She hesitated because she had not anticipated the question. George was not like other men. He would not be flattered by merely being informed that the whole Sher-rington Trimm establishment had been kept up a month beyond the usual time, on a war footing, as it were, for his sole and express benefit. Most men would be pleased at being considered of enough importance to be told such a thing, though they might not believe the statement altogether. It was necessary that George should know that Totty was speaking the truth, if she answered his

question directly. She hesitated and looked at the point of her little slipper.

'What does it matter?' she asked suddenly, looking up and smiling at him affectionately.

It was very well done. The strongest asseverations could not have expressed more clearly her readiness to sacrifice everything she could to his comfort. George was touched.

'You have been very good to me, Totty. I cannot thank you enough.' He took her hand and pressed it warmly.

'What is the use of having friends unless they will stand by you?' she asked, returning the pressure, while her face grew grave and sad.

Since she had written her first note after his disappointment, she had never referred to his troubles. He had answered her on that occasion as he answered every one, by saying that there had never been any engagement, and he had marvelled at her exceeding tact in avoiding the subject ever since. Her reference to it now, however, seemed natural, and did not hurt him.

'You have been more than a friend to me,' he answered. 'I feel as though you were my sister—only, if you were, I suppose I should be less grateful.'

'No, you would not,' said Totty, with a smile of genuine pleasure, produced of course by the success of her operations. 'Do you want to do something to please me—something to show your gratitude?'

'Whatever I can——'

'Come and spend the summer with us—no, I do not mean you to make a visit of a month or six weeks. Pack up all your belongings, come down with us and be one of the family, till we are ready to come back to town. Make your head-quarters with us, write your book, go away and make visits for a week when you like, but consider that our house is your home. Will you?'

'But, Totty, you would be sick of the sight of me——' Visions of an enchanted existence by the river rose before George's eyes. He was to some extent intellectually demoralised, and every agreeable prospect in the future resolved itself into the thought of mental rest superinduced by boundless luxury and material comfort.

'What an idea!' exclaimed Totty indignantly. 'Besides, if you knew how interested I am in making the proposal, you would see that you would be conferring a favour instead of accepting one.'

She laughed softly when she had finished the sentence, thinking how very true her words were.

'I cannot understand how,' George answered. 'Please explain. I really cannot see how I shall be conferring a favour by eating your wonderful dinners and drinking that champagne of Sherry's.'

Totty laughed again.

'I wish you would finish it! It would be ever so much better for his liver, if you would.'

She wondered what George would think if he knew that a fresh supply of that particular brand of *brut* was already on its way from France, ordered in the hope that he might accept the invitation she was now pressing upon him.

'And as for the cook,' she continued, 'he will do nothing unless there is a man in the party. That is it, George. I have told you now. Dear Sherry is not coming back until the autumn, and Mamie and I feel dreadfully unprotected down there all by ourselves. Please, please come and take care of us. I knew you would come—oh, I am so glad! It is such a relief to feel that you will be with us!'

As indeed it was, since if George was under Totty's personal supervision there would be no chance of his returning to his former allegiance to Constance. George himself saw that her reasons were not serious, and considering the previous conversation and its earnest tone, he thought that he saw through Totty's playfulness and kindly wish to do a very friendly action.

'I will tell you what I will do,' he said. 'I will come for a month——'

'No—I will not have you for a month, nor for two months—the whole summer or nothing.'

So George at last consented, and left town two or three days later with Mrs. Sherrington Trimm and her daughter. He had felt that in some way he was acting weakly, and that he had yielded too easily to his cousin's invitation; but if he had been in any doubt about her sincere desire to keep him during the whole season, his anxiety was removed when, as soon as he was established in his new quarters, Totty immediately began to talk of plans for the months before them, in all of which George played a principal part, and Mamie took it for granted that there was to be no separation until they should all go back to New York together. During the first few days George allowed himself to be utterly idle and let the hours pass with an indifference to all thought which he had never known before.

He had been transported into a sort of fairyland, of which he had enjoyed occasional glimpses at other times, but which he had never had an opportunity of knowing intimately. It was unlike anything in his experience. Even the journey had not reminded him of other journeys, for it had been performed in that luxurious privacy which is dear to the refined American. Mr. Craik's yacht was permanently at his sister's disposal, and on the morning appointed for the departure she and Mamie and George had driven down to the pier at their leisure and had gone on board. It had been but a step from the perfectly appointed house in the city to the equally perfect dwelling on the water, and only one step more from the snowy deck of the yacht to the flower-garden before the country mansion on the banks of the great river. Everything had been ready for them, on board and on shore, and George could not realise when the journey was over that he had been carried over a distance which he formerly only traversed in the heat and dust of a noisy train, or on the crowded deck of a river steamboat. He had passed the hot hours sitting under the cool shade of a double awning, in the most comfortable of chairs beside Mamie Trimm and opposite to her mother. There had been no noise, no tramping of sailors, no blowing of whistles, no shouting of orders. From time to time, indeed, he caught a glimpse of the captain's feet as he paced the bridge, but that was all. At midday a servant had appeared and Totty had glanced at him, glanced at the table beside her and nodded. Immediately luncheon had been served and George had recognised the touch of the master in the two or three delicacies he had tasted, and had found in his glass, wine of the famous brand which was said to have caused Sherry Trimm's sufferings. He had divided with Mamie a priceless peach, which had no natural right to be ripe on the last day of May, and Totty had selected for him a little bunch of muscat grapes such as he might not have eaten in the south before September. George tasted the ambrosia and swallowed the nectar, and enjoyed the beautiful scenery, the two pretty faces and the pleasant voices in his ear, thinking, perhaps, of the old times when, after a desperate morning's work at reviewing trash, he had sat down to a luncheon of cold meat, pickles, and tea. The thought of the contrast made the present more delightful.

The spell was not broken, and Totty's country-house prolonged without interruption the series of exquisite sensations which had been intermittent during the last month in New York. If Totty had intended to play the part of the tempter, instead of being the

chief comforter, she could not have done it with a more diabolical skill. She believed that a man could always be more easily attacked by the senses than by his intelligence, and she put every principle of her belief into her acts. She partly knew, and partly guessed, the manner of George's former life, the absence of luxury, the monotony of an existence in which common necessities were always provided for in the same way, without stint but without variety. Her art consisted in creating contrasts of unlike perfections, so that the senses, unable to decide between the amount of pleasure experienced yesterday, enjoyed to-day, and anticipated to-morrow, should be kept in a constant state of suspended judgment. She had practised this system with her husband and it had often succeeded in persuading him to let her have her own way, and she practised it continually for her own personal satisfaction, as being the only means of extracting all possible enjoyment from her existence.

George fell under the charm without even making an effort to resist it. Why, he asked himself dreamily, should he resist anything that was good in itself and harmless in its consequences? His life had all at once fallen in pleasant places. Should he disappoint Totty and give Mamie pain by a sudden determination to break up all their plans and return to the heat of the city? He could work here as well as anywhere else—better if there was any truth in the theory that the mind should be more active when the body is subject to no pain or inconvenience. A deal of asceticism had been forced upon him since he had been seventeen years old, and he believed that a surfeit of luxuries would do him no harm now. He would get tired of it all, no doubt, and would be very glad to go back to his more simple existence.

Totty, however, was far too accomplished an Epicurean to allow her patient a surfeit of anything. She watched him more narrowly than he supposed, and was ready with a change, not when she saw signs of fatigue in his manner, his face, or his appetite, but before that, as soon as she had seen that he was pleased. She was playing a great game, and her attention never relaxed. There was a fortune at stake of which he himself did not dream, and of which even she did not know the extent. She had everything in her favour. The coast was clear, for Sherrington was in Europe. The final scene was prepared, since Mamie was already in love with George. She herself was a past master of scene-shifting, and her theatre was well provided with properties of every description. All that was necessary was that the hero

should take a fancy to the heroine. But the very fact that it all looked so easy aroused Totty's anxiety. She said to herself that what appeared to be most simple was often, in reality, most difficult, and she warned herself to be careful and diffident of success.

Fortunately, Mamie was all she could desire her to be. She did not believe in beauty as a means of attracting a disappointed man. Beauty could only draw his mind into making comparisons, and comparisons must revive recollection and reawaken regret. She had more faith in Mamie's subtle charm of manner, voice, and motion than she would have had in all the faultless perfections of classic features, queenly stature, and royal carriage. That charm of hers gave her an individuality of her own, such as Constance Fearing had never possessed, unlike anything that George had ever noticed in other girls or women. Doubtless he might have too much of that, too, as well as of other things, but Totty was even more cautious of the effects she produced with Mamie than of those she brought about by her minute attention to the management of her house. And here her greatest skill appeared, for she had to play a game of three-sided duplicity. She had to please George, without wearying him, to regulate the intercourse between the two so as to suit her own ends, and to invent reasons for making Mamie behave as she desired that she should without communicating to the girl a word of her intentions. If George appeared to have been enjoying especially a quiet conversation with Mamie, he must be prevented from talking to her again alone for at least twenty-four hours, and even then he must be allowed to please himself in the matter. This was not easy, for Mamie was by this time blindly in love with him, and if she were not watched would be foolish enough to bore him by her frequent presence at his side. To keep her away from him long enough to make him want her company needed much diplomacy. If George went out for a turn in the garden, and if Mamie joined him without an invitation, Totty could not pursue the pair in order to protect George from being bored. Hitherto, also, Mamie had made no confidences to her mother and did not seem inclined to make any. Manifestly, if an accident could happen by which Mamie could be brought to betray herself to her careful parent, great advantages would ensue. The careful parent would then appear as the firm and skilful ally of the love-lorn daughter, the two would act in concert and great results might be effected. Totty was not only really fond of George, in her own way, but it would not have suited her that a hair of his head should be injured. Nevertheless, she nourished all sorts of

malicious hopes against him at this stage. She wished that he might be thrown from his horse and brought home unhurt but insensible, or that he might upset his boat on the river under Mamie's eyes—in short, that something might happen to him which should give Mamie a shock and throw her into her mother's arms.

Providence, however, did not come to Totty's assistance and she was thrown upon her own resources, aided in some small degree by an extraneous circumstance. The marriage of John Bond and Grace Fearing had been talked of for a long time, and Totty one morning learned that it was to take place immediately. She could not guess why they had chosen to be married in the very middle of the summer, when all their friends were out of town, and she had no inclination to go to the wedding, which was to be conducted without any great gathering or display of festivity. John Bond, as being Sherrington Trimm's partner and an old friend of Totty's, urged her, of course, to come down to town for the occasion, and to bring Mamie; but the heat was intense, and as there would be nothing to see and no one present with whom she would care to talk, and nothing good to eat, and, on the whole, nothing whatever to do except to grin and look pleased, Totty made up her mind that she would have nothing to do with the affair, beyond sending Grace an expensive present. There were no regular invitations sent out, and George received no notice of what was happening. Totty, however, did not lose the opportunity of talking to Mamie about it all, with a view to sounding her views upon matrimony in general and upon her own future in particular.

'Johnnie Bond is such a fine fellow!' said Totty to her daughter, when they had been talking for some time.

Mamie admitted that he was a very fine fellow indeed.

'Tell me, Mamie,' said her mother, assuming a tone at once cheerful and confidential, 'is not Johnnie Bond very nearly your ideal of what a husband ought to be?'

'Not in the least!' answered the young girl promptly. Totty looked very much surprised.

'No? Why, Mamie, I thought you always liked him so much!'

'So I do, in a way. But he is not at all in my style, mamma.'

'What is your style, as you call it?' Totty seemed intensely interested as she paused for an answer. Mamie blushed, and looked down at a piece of work she was holding.

'Well—to begin with,' she said, speaking quickly, 'Mr. Bond is three-quarters lawyer and one-quarter idiot. At least I believe so. And all the rest of him is boating and tennis and—everything

one does, you know—sport and all that. I never heard him make an intelligent remark in his life, though papa says he is as clever as they make them, for a lawyer of course. You know what I mean, mamma. He is one of those dreadfully earnest young men, who do everything with a purpose, as if it meant money, and they meant to get it. Oh, I could not bear to marry one of them! They are all exactly alike—so many steam-engines turned out by the same maker!’

‘Dear me, Mamie!’ laughed Mrs. Trimm. ‘What very decided opinions you have!’

‘I suppose Grace Fearing has decided opinions, too, in the opposite direction, or she would not have married him. I never can understand her, either, with those great dark eyes and that determined expression—she looks like a girl out of a novel, and I believe there is no more romance about her than there is in a hat-stand! There cannot be, if she likes Master Johnnie Bond—and there is no reason why she should marry him, unless she does like him, is there?’

‘None that I can see, but that is a very good one—good enough for anyone, I should think. You would not care for Johnnie Bond, but you may care for some one else. You have not told me what your ideal would be like.’

‘Where is the use? You ought to know, mamma, without being told.’

‘Of course I ought, child—only I am so stupid. Would he be dark or fair?’

‘Dark,’ answered the young girl, bending over her work.

‘And clever, I suppose? Of course. And slender, and romantic to look at?’

‘Oh, don’t, mamma! Talk about something else.’

‘Why? I am not sure that we might not agree about the ideal.’

‘No!’ exclaimed Mamie with a little half-scornful laugh. ‘We should never agree about him, because I would like him poor.’

‘You can afford to marry a poor man, if you please,’ said Totty thoughtfully. ‘But would you not be afraid that he loved you more better than yourself?’

‘No, indeed! I should love him, and then—I should believe in him, of course.’

‘Then I do not see why you should not marry your ideal after all, my dear. Come, darling—we both know whom we are talking

about. Why not say it to each other? I would help you then. I am almost as fond of him as you are.'

Mamie blushed quickly and then turned pale. She looked suspiciously at her mother.

'You are not in earnest, mamma,' she said, after a short pause.

'Indeed I am, child,' answered Mrs. Trimm, meeting her gaze fearlessly. 'Do you think that I have not known it for a long time? And do you think I would have brought him here if I had not been perfectly willing that you should marry him?'

The young girl suddenly sprang up and threw her arms round her mother's neck.

'Oh, mamma, mamma! This is too good! Too good! Too good!'

'Dear child!' exclaimed Totty, kissing her affectionately. 'Is not your happiness always the first thing in my mind? Would I not sacrifice everything for that?'

'Yes—you are so sweet and dear. I know you would,' said Mamie, sitting down beside her and resting her head upon her mother's plump little shoulder. 'But you see—I thought that nobody knew, because we have always been together so much. And then I thought you would think what you just said—about the money, you know. But it is not true—I mean it would not be true. He would never care for that.'

'No,' answered Totty, almost forgetting herself. 'I should think not! I mean—with his character—he is so honourable and fair—like your papa in that. But, Mamie, darling, do you think he——?'

Totty stopped, conveying the rest of her question by means of an inquiringly sympathetic smile. Mamie shook her head a little sadly, and looked down.

'I am afraid he never will,' she said, in a low voice. 'And yet he should, for I—oh, mother! I love him so—you will never know!'

She buried her face and her blushes in her hand upon her mother's shoulder. Totty patted her head affectionately and kissed her curls several times in a very motherly way. Her own face was suffused with smiles, for she felt that she had done a very good day's work, and was surprised to think that it had been accomplished so easily. The fact was that Mamie was only too ready to speak of what filled her whole life, and had more than once been on the point of telling her mother all she felt. She had supposed, however, that she knew the ways of her mother's wisdom,

and that George's poverty would always be an insuperable obstacle. She did not now in the least understand why Totty made so light of the question of money, and even in her great happiness at finding such ready sympathy she thought it very strange that she should have so completely mistaken her mother's character.

From that day, however, there was a tacit understanding between the two. Mamie was in that singular and not altogether dignified position in which a woman finds herself when she loves a man and has determined to win him, though she is not loved in return. There are, doubtless, many young women in the world who, whether for love or for interest, have wooed and won their present husbands, though the latter have never found it out, and would not believe it if it were told to them. Mamie differed from most of these, however, in that she was as modest as she was loving, and in her real distrust of her own advantages—which defect, or quality, was, perhaps, at the root of her peculiar charm. She knew that she was not beautiful, and she believed that beauty was a woman's strongest weapon. She had yet to learn that the way to men's hearts is not always through their eyes.

After her confession to her mother she began to discover the value of that ingenious lady's experience and tact. At first, indeed, she felt a modest hesitation in coolly doing what she was told, as a means of winning George's heart; but she soon found out that her mother was always right, and that she herself was generally wrong.

'There is only one way of doing things,' said Totty one day, 'and that is the right way. There is only one thing that a man really hates, and that is being bored. And men are very easily bored, my dear. A man likes to have everything done for him in the most perfect way, but it spoils his enjoyment to feel that it is done especially for him and for nobody else. If you are afraid he will catch cold, do not run after him with his hat, as though he were an invalid. That is only an example, Mamie. Men have an immense body of tradition to sustain, and they do it by keeping up appearances as well as they can. All men are supposed to be brave, strong, honourable, enduring and generous. They are supposed never to feel hot when we do, nor to catch cold when we should. It is a part of their stage character never to be afraid of anything, and many of them are far more timid than we are. I do not mean to say that dear George has not all the qualities a man ought to have. Certainly not. He is quite the finest fellow I ever knew, but he does not want you to notice the fact. He

wants you to take it for granted, just as much as little Tippy Skiffington does, who is afraid of a mouse, and would not touch a dog that had no muzzle on for all he is worth, which is saying a great deal. Dear George would not like it to be supposed that he cares for terrapin and dry champagne any more than for pork and beans, and yet the dear fellow is keenly alive to the difference. He does not want it to be thought he could ever be bored by you or me, but he knows that we know that he might be, and he expects us to use tact and to leave him alone sometimes, even for a whole day. He will be much more glad to see us the next time we meet him and will show it by giving himself much more trouble to be agreeable. It is not true that if you run away men will follow you. They are far too lazy for that. You must come to them, but not too often. What they most want is amusement, and between their amusements to be allowed to do exactly what their high and mighty intellects suggest to them, without comment. Never ask a man where he has been, what he has seen, nor what he has heard. If he has anything to tell, he will tell you, and if he has not you only humiliate him by discovering the emptiness of his thoughts. Always ask his opinion. If he has none himself, he knows somebody who has, no matter what the subject may be. The difference between men and women is very simple, my dear. Women look greater fools than they are, and men are greater fools than they look, except in the things they know how to do and do well.'

'George is not a fool about anything!' said Mamie indignantly. She had been listening with considerable interest to her mother's homily.

'George, my dear,' answered Totty, 'is very foolish not to be in love with you at the present moment. Or, if he is, he is very foolish to hide it.'

'I wish you would not talk like that, mamma! I am not half good enough for him.'

Nevertheless, Mamie consulted her mother and was guided by her. George would ride: should she accept his proposal and go with him, or not? A word, a glance, decided the matter for her, and George was none the wiser. He could not help thinking, however, that Mamie was becoming an extremely tactful young person, as well as a most agreeable companion. One day he could not resist his inclination to tell her so.

'How clever you are, Mamie!' he exclaimed after a pause in the conversation.

‘I? Clever?’ The girl’s face expressed her innocent astonishment at the compliment.

‘Yes. You are a most charming person to live with. How in the world did you know that I wanted to be alone yesterday, and that I wanted you to come with me to-day?’ George laughed. ‘Do I not always ask you to come with me in precisely the same tone? Do I not always look as though I wanted you to come? How do you always know?’

Mamie was conscious that she blushed even more than she usually did when she was momentarily embarrassed. Indeed, the blush had two distinct causes on the present occasion. She had at first been delighted by the compliment he had paid her, and then, immediately afterwards, when he explained what he meant, she had felt her shame burning in her face. On the previous day, as on the present afternoon, she had blindly followed her mother’s advice, given by an almost imperceptible motion of the head and eyes that had indicated a negation on the first occasion and assent on the second. She was silent now, and could find no words with which to answer his question.

‘How do you do it?’ he asked again, wondering at her embarrassment, and slackening the pace at which he rowed, for they were in a boat together towards sunset.

Mamie’s eyes suddenly filled with hot tears, and she hid her face with her small hands.

‘Why, Mamie dear, what is it?’ George asked, resting on his oars and leaning forward.

‘Oh, George,’ she sobbed, ‘if you only knew!’

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

THE NEW HUMOUR.

THE footman in *Punch*, weary of beef and mutton, thought it high time some new animal was invented. Apparently authors think it high time that some new kind of humour was invented. The unhappy thing is that people who were born before 1871, or so, cannot enjoy the New Humour—nay, feel as if the New Humour were the old drivel. These remarks have their occasion in the appearance of a little book, *In a Canadian Canoe*, by Mr. Barry Pain.¹ Nothing gives me less enjoyment than to speak unkindly of a new and young writer. We need new writers, we need young writers, above all we need humorists. Mr. Barry Pain, according to a reviewer in *Punch*, is all that we want. The Baron de Bookworms is not acting as his own critic at present in *Punch*, it is an 'Assistant Reader' who distributes justice. According to him, *In a Canadian Canoe* is refreshing, piquant, quaint, original, delightful; it contains humour, insight, pathos, grimness, charming irrelevancy, run-away topsy-turvy wit. Once more, the book is 'not only witty and humorous but fresh and original,' which, indeed, the Assistant Reader had told us already. But not even if he tells us it thrice is it true, 'true for me,' at least. He adds that the work has 'quaintness and fun touched with pathos and refinement.'

Very well. Let us examine a few passages in a volume praised with a praise which would not be exaggerated if applied to *Tristram Shandy*. The author begins by launching his canoe in the fluid which stagnates at the backs of the Colleges in Cambridge. Then he remarks, 'Oh, confound the boat! I wish I had tied it up. It's just taken the painter between its teeth, and whipped sharp round and bolted. Woa, my lass; steady! It's a little fresh, you see, not having been out before this week. I beg your pardon, sir; *entirely* my fault.' Now, is all this quaint, witty, humorous,

¹ *In a Canadian Canoe*. By Mr. Barry Pain. (Henry & Co.)

refined, original, or is it mere gabble? The author goes on to tell the tale of two sardines crossed in love. 'They never told their love. They met but once before their last day . . . she caught his eye, and the umpire gave it out. "Am I a hymn?" he said, just a little bitterly, "that I should be given out?" He was not a hymn, but he was a he, and had a tender heart.' Of course it may be my want of taste, my senile imbecility, my ill-temper, the weather, or some other such cause may be at work, but, for the life of me, I can see nothing witty, or quaint, or original, or refined, or humorous, either in these puns, taken separately, or in the setting of the jewels. The agreeably refined apologue about a doe sardine and a buck sardine, and Queen Cleopatra and Duilius, and the novels of Ouida, which the sardine read—I vow that I fail to see this fun merely because it is Cambridge fun. Mr. Anstey's fun is Cambridge fun, and there is no better; Mr. Payn, Mr. Burnand, Mr. Besant are all Cambridge humorists, and all are humorous. But in this rigmarole about the sardines one only observes an author trying his hardest to be funny. Any man, woman, or child, if wholly destitute of *esprit*, could be comic in this fashion, 'if he abandoned his mind to it.' All the mirth in the apologue was exhausted long ago, when first the human mind conceived the idea of an oyster crossed in love. The rest, methinks, is the very leavings of verbiage. How a nonsensical courtship can be made really amusing, everyone may read in Mr. Lear's narrative about the Yongi Bongi Bo and Mrs. Jingley Jones. That is nonsense, of course, but it is witty and diverting nonsense. The sardine story is mere gabble, at least it affects myself as mere gabble. Either I am wrong, or the Assistant Reader is wrong. One of us is absolutely out of his reckoning. Our ideas of what amuses us are irreconcilable. There is one possible hypothesis: a new kind of humour may have arisen, and may demand in its consumers a new kind of intellectual palate. That the New Humour is wholly unlike aught in Aristophanes, Rabelais, Swift, Sterne, Dickens, Mark Twain, or Holmes, has none of their qualities, has qualities not theirs, I am absolutely convinced. Yet where is the criterion? To what jury can we appeal? A special jury of eminent humorists might be empanelled, and I would stake my all on their verdict. But we cannot summon these jurymen; we have no criterion but the opinion of three generations, and we shall all be dead before that opinion is pronounced. If it be funny to talk of an Athenian boy, and his interview with an old man who drank gin, and wore an

india-rubber dickey covered with luminous paint, I fail to see the fun. As a rule I am rather easily moved to laughter, by every kind of joke; I can even laugh with Mr. Jerome, though rarely, as well as with Yorick. But these new jokes vanquish me; they make me feel more than commonly suicidal. Anybody can put together incongruous bosh. Anybody can say that a clothes-horse delivered lectures on phonetic decay, to an audience composed of beefeaters and baboos. But all that kind of irrelevant rubbish is no more humorous, or witty, or refined, or quaint, or original than Humpty Dumpty is Abracadabra. It is not original to utter propositions never advanced before, if these propositions are merely meaningless. Behold another example of *esprit*. 'A man made himself believe that he loved Bradelby's sister, and he never got any better. He just pined away and married her. Perhaps you don't realise what that means, but you never met Bradelby's sister. . . . She said that she wanted to live a useful life. That sort of thing stamps a woman.' Is there any stage of conviviality, at any wine-party, in which this maundering could be mistaken for humour? As for the rest of the book, let the public buy it, and study the New Humour for itself, and make up its mind on the subject. Extracts may be misleading, only a profound study of the New Humour in mass and in the original should convince us of its merit or demerit. But it seems pretty certain that the same mind cannot appreciate both the New Humour and the old.

* * *

The following account of the purchase of a devil-box, lately received from a friend of a wandering disposition, seems to have a good deal of the old humour in it:

'I sent you yesterday, to your London address, a devil-box from Apemama, Kingsmill Islands. Mr. — gave it in my charge for you, and directed me to explain to you how it came into his possession.

'The little *Equator* dropped us on the island, assisted the King's people to build and fit out our camp, and sailed away, leaving us for a couple of months. One day, Mr. — wandered away to a devil-tree where an old gentleman was engaged in Sequah cures with the assistance of this invaluable box. With British gold Mr. — endeavoured to get the box from the aged devil-man. First one sovereign was offered, then another, with due pauses to allow the old gentleman time to think twice before refusing. One sovereign did not move him, two shook him; at

the third he began to tremble and his eyes to bulge out ; at four he gasped, and a huge silence fell upon the assembled populace ; at five there was the intensest excitement, and a dozen fellows were hanging to the box, in very fear lest it should fly away of its own accord. Then the King's sister arrived on the scene—dramatic and livid with anger. She made a little speech. "What! Part with your children's health, your fathers', your mothers' peaceful old age," &c.—and completely shrivelled them up. Seven sovereigns—an incredible sum there—the value of a gun—failed to change the situation. "And you'll let your children die for seven sovereigns!" said the King's sister. A little after returning to the camp, up came King Tentenoka—puffing and blowing—with a servant carrying the box.

"I like make present," said Majesty, tersely, and laid the box on the mat. "You like devil-box, more better you take him. Man plenty 'fraid—King no 'fraid—King make present."

'— thereupon informed the King that as the man had made such a hard fight, and had resisted temptation, it would be the handsome thing to give five sovereigns to the worthy devil-worker.

'This quite staggered the King. "No," he said. "All belong me ; island belong me ; people, they all belong me ; what belong people belong me. I like you too much ; I make present."

'But —— insisted.

"Perhaps more better," said the King reflectively.

"Tupposty [suppose] you give money. I tink you good man. You like give, all right ; you no like give, all right all same."

'And so five sovereigns were handed over to the dazed devil-worker. On our return to the island lately, I believe the King would have bought back the box for fifty pounds. Measles had reached the group, and hundreds had died.'

* * *

I regret to say that the Devil (he is a shell) and his Box, a very home-made article indeed, bring me no luck. For example, staying beside a Highland stream where the fish declined to take the fly, I bethought me of the Phantom Minnow, the lure which irritated Piscator Anglus in a recent apologue. Every one said, the head-keeper himself said, that the salmon would not look at 'the eenstrument,' as he styled the minnow. Now it was genius and enterprise that led me to make experiments with the phantom,

but it was pure bad luck that left me with only one phantom, and that intended for trout, in my possession. This instrument first hooked a salmon which ran down a strong stream, and carried off a triangle. On the second time of asking, he hooked another salmon, behind an alder bush, and that salmon bolted down another cataract and carried off the second triangle. That was where the Devil in the Devil-box, so dearly and dramatically purchased in far-off seas, failed to assist his new owner. 'It is well worth while to have a Devil,' as Memnon, in Voltaire's tale, found it well worth while to have a protecting Genius. Perhaps there is another moral—not to fish for salmon with trout-tackle.

* * *

Second sight is a subject naturally appropriate in the Highlands, whither the Psychical Society might well send an inquirer, who must know Gaelic. The second sight is still not discredited by old people, though, as Alan says in the *Legend of Montrose*, they now live so near the Saxon that the light is less freely poured upon them. The most famous seer, Cionneach Odhar Fiosaiche, commonly called the Brahan seer, was born in Lews early in the seventeenth century. His predictions are recorded by Mr. Mackenzie, F.S.A., in a shilling pamphlet which fails to convince the reasoning faculties. Mr. Mackenzie, of course, only gives the traditional facts, and does not ask belief for them. The chief peculiarity of the seer was his possession of a small mysterious stone, in which he foresaw the future. Seers, as a rule, had visions with no aid from a crystal of any kind. Cionneach's crystal was mysteriously dropped into his bosom, when someone was attempting to poison him. He looked at the stone before tasting the food, and detected the murderous attempt. One is not aware that other Highlanders used crystals as the Egyptian mirror of ink is used. They merely saw with the second sight. Cionneach's recorded prophecies are, as a rule, either shrewd guesses or are so obscurely delivered in oracular language that any meaning might be attached to them, after any event. He seems to have guessed the making of the Caledonian Canal, which was not very difficult. He usually predicted disasters, which are certain to arrive sooner or later; for all families must lose their lands at last, and all power decline. We fail to find any documentary and contemporary authority for Cionneach's famous final prophecy about the doom of the Seaforths. Who recorded it, who wrote it down, what is its pedigree, and who is to be surety for Sir Bernard Burke's assertion about the four afflicted lairds: buck-toothed,

hare-lipped, half-witted, and stammering? Cionneach is a picturesque but unsatisfactory figure. Better modern second sight, among the Zulus, is vouched for by the late Mr. Leslie. Cionneach may have been a clairvoyant, but he certainly had a most Delphian trick of 'hedging' and arranging his predictions. He seldom boded good luck to anybody, prophets rarely do, and bad luck is certain, if we wait for it long enough.

* * *

Does any philologist know the origin of the phrase 'No go?' Can it be derived from *Robinson Crusoe*, chapter iii.? 'We saw people stand upon the shore to look at us: we could also perceive they were quite black, and stark naked. I was once inclined to have gone on shore to them, but Xury was my better counsellor, and said to me, 'No go! No go!' Xury, in his broken English, only meant 'Don't go!' but the phrase may conceivably, if not very probably, have worked its way into slang. On the other hand we say 'Here's a go!' which looks as if a go were an independent substantive on its own basis, as 'a go of brandy and water.' Dr. Murray's dictionary may tell us all about it when the dictionary reaches G.

* * *

It is not easy to speak here as one could wish to speak of the death of Mr. Lowell. The world misses few people, but Mr. Lowell it will miss, for few men had so many friends in so many countries; few were interested in and interesting about so many topics; few, indeed, had characters so kindly, genial, strong, and, in the best sense, humane. Mr. Lowell, though he looked almost a young man, was a survivor of the best age of American literature. He was the contemporary of Longfellow, Hawthorne, Emerson, Poe, Prescott, and of the still surviving Mr. Whittier. How came it that forty or fifty years ago the literature of the Republic was so sound, flourishing, dignified, and comparatively devoid of irritable self-consciousness? There are now far more readers, literature is flattered and rewarded, not neglected and starved. Yet the great age, the classical American age, is divided from us by forty years, and the tremendous labour of the war has given birth to no new development of genius. Mr. Lowell was a man of the great time: he was a poet and a patriot: when most a patriot most a poet. But it is as a humorist and an essayist that he will live in renown, more than as a poet. What must live only in his friends' recollection, and in widening circles of good will, is his kindness and sympathy, his manly humour, his gift of

encouragement ; his vast knowledge of letters. In ancient French poetical relics, Mr. Lowell was one of the two most learned of English-speaking men. Only one other student, among the English races, had read so much old French. To myself he suggested a translation of one favourite, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, and insisted on his desire till I did the work, in such fashion as I might. The little tract is dedicated to him. Would that it were still in our power by any means to please him who was so easily pleased, so humorous, so good-humoured, despite a little patriotic petulance now and then displayed ! Many good Americans do we meet in letters and in the world, but Mr. Lowell was the flower of them all ; in all that he did, wrote, and said giving the world assurance of a man. Culture could not make him fanciful or unduly fastidious, nor the study of letters diminish his robust interest in and knowledge of public affairs. Yes, he was of the great race, was of mightier mould than the literary generations of to-day ; had a genius at once sure, powerful, and kindly, without freak or paradox or doubt. Mr. Lowell's religious faith (if one may mention such matters) had a solidity and fervour which surprised some and might well convert others of a wavering temper. I know that I cannot praise him to the measure of his desert, nor bear adequate testimony to the qualities which we knew and admired and loved, and yet it is difficult to be silent in our regret *tam cari capitis*.

A. LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following contributions :—

L. D. 2s. Mr. G. A. Grierson 7l. Miss Edith Stokes 5s. (accidentally omitted in June number), and a parcel of clothing from G. H. T.

The Sisters have received the following at 42A Dock Street, E. :—

August.—Scrap-book from Miss Porter. Old clothes from Mrs. Lamb. Nice lot of clothes for the Friend in Need, a poor woman, Anon. Woollies from Miss French, L.D. Old clothes and magazines from 'Amos,' L.D. Beautiful lot of men's clothes, nearly new (no name). Fruit, vegetables, and flowers from Miss L. Kaye. Fur cloak, Anon. Parcel of men's clothes for the 'Donna' (no name) —sent from Durham Station.

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The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

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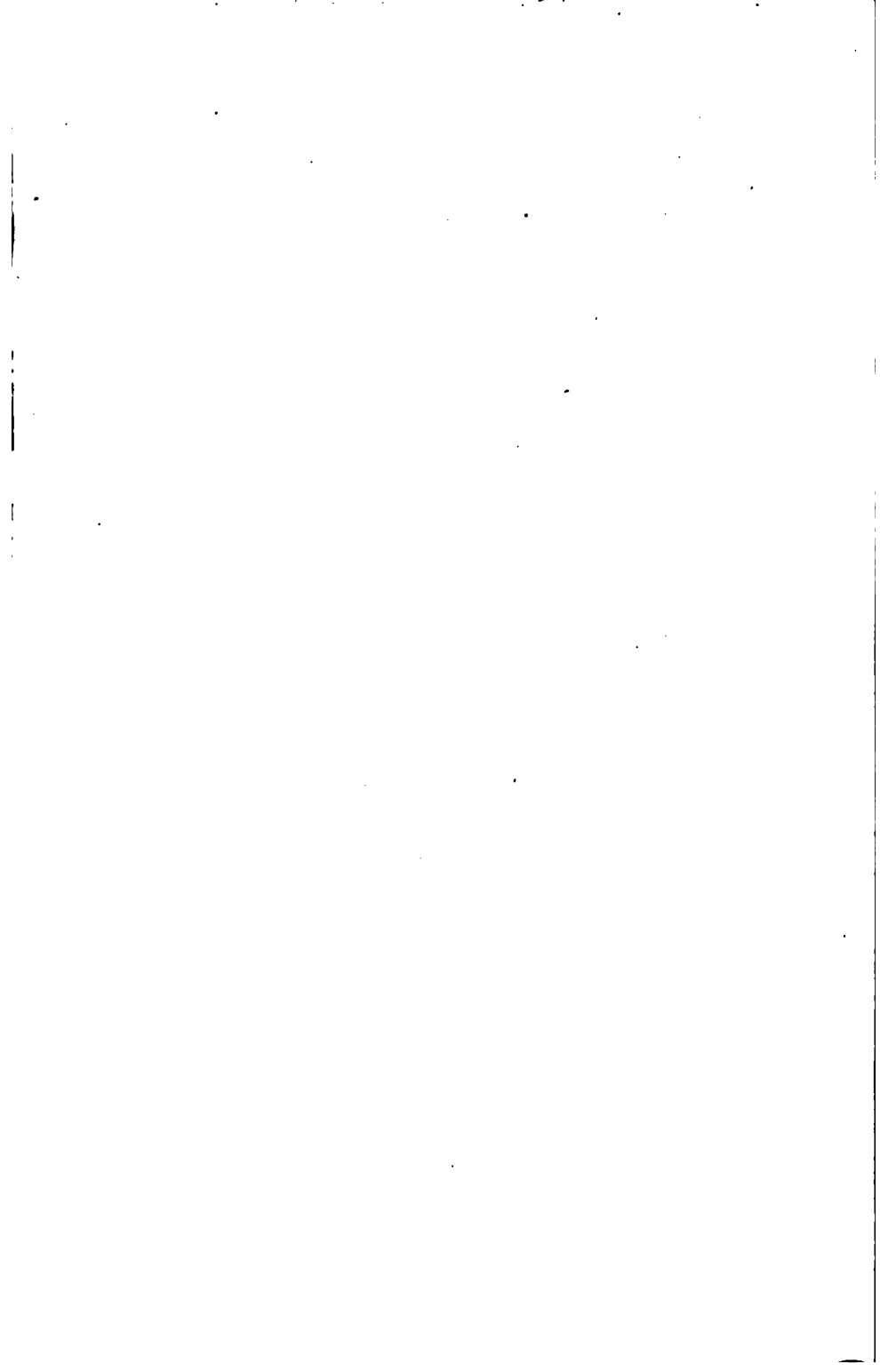
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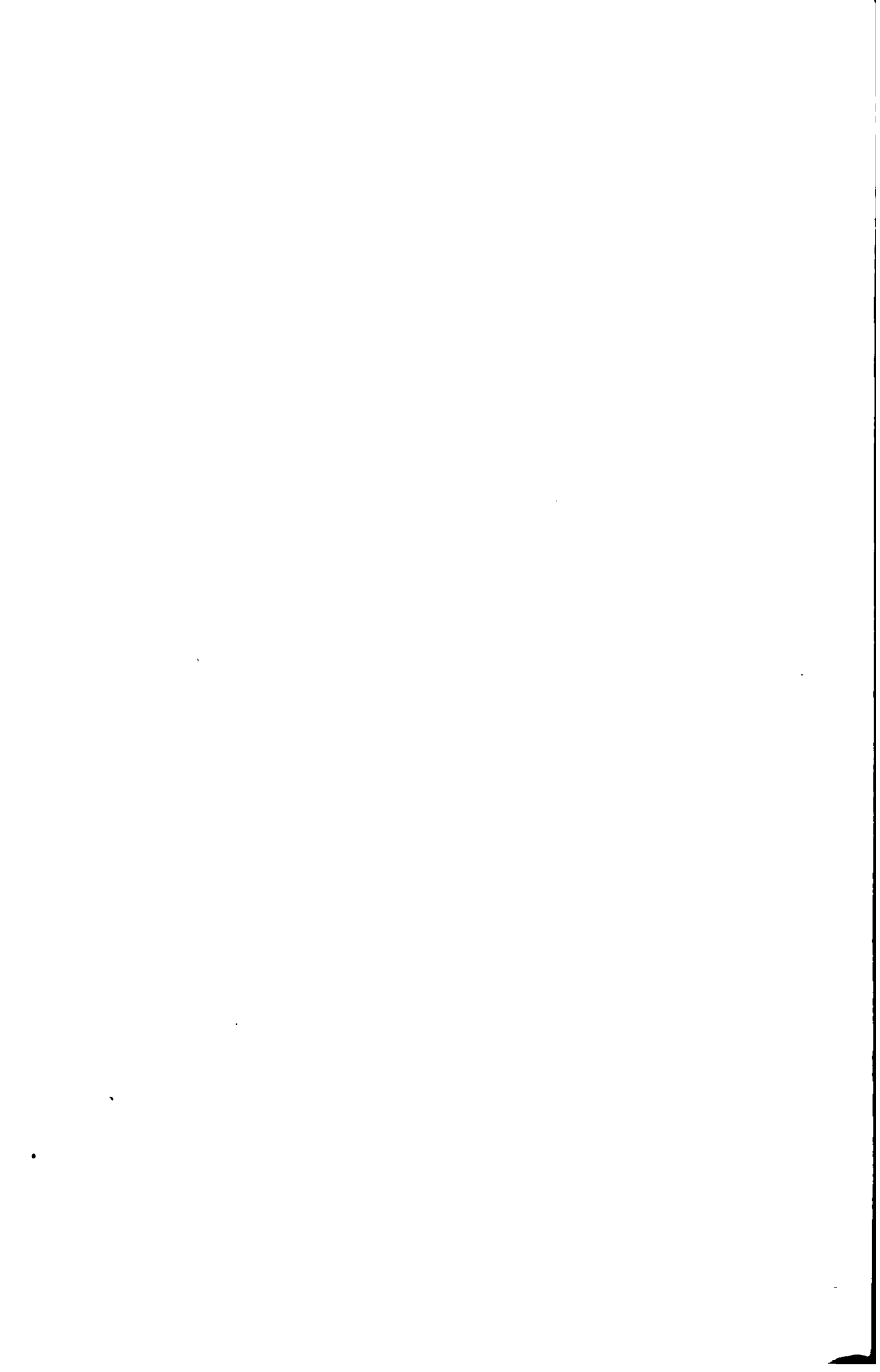
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